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NOTES OF THE WEEK

THE House of Commons has been debating the Alternative Vote, the Abolition of Plural Voting and University seats during the week; and the discussion has followed ordinary party lines. The cut and thrust is understood to have amused members, who are said to have laughed loudly at each other's jokes. I can find no indication that the public is even mildly interested in these matters.

For myself, I am (somewhat unexpectedly) in agreement with Mr. Maxton, who remarked that it is futile to alter the machine of parliamentary elec-

tions until the machinery of Parliament is itself reformed. Everybody knows that this is true, and that the House tolerates a procedure which no business organization, learned society, or any other human institution would put up with for an hour. But nothing is done, and nothing will be done, to remedy this absurdity.

The wreck of the flying-boat Blackburn Iris III in Plymouth Sound with the loss of nine gallant lives must be taken, with what stoicism we can muster, as part of the price demanded by the gods for the admiralty of the air. The hydroplane has already proved its possibilities, but it remains to be seen whether in this case some defect of design or some personal miscalculation was responsible for the disaster.

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In this connexion, some adverse comment is being made on the delay, either in presentation or publication, of the report on the R 101. It is several weeks since the taking of evidence before the enquiry was completed, and unless there is some technical reason for further enquiry into the possibility of mechanical or engineering defects—as in the Meopham smash—there seems no reason for further postponement. Should there be any valid reason for delay, it ought to have been publicly announced.

No doubt the Government would like to forget the disaster at Beauvais, and the evil genius which prompted them to try to dazzle the Imperial Conference with a revolution in transport as an alternative to a political policy. But though the public memory is short, it is not so short as that, and if the report is not soon forthcoming, questions will be asked as to the date when it may be expected.

It is difficult to understand why the Secretary of State for Air should have found it necessary to be rude to Lady Houston by a gibe at her dead husband's millions. In the first place, she is a lady, and one does not generally cavil at a widow because she benefits under a marriage settlement; and in the second place, she generously came to the help of the Government, and got them out of a mess of their own making over the Schneider Trophy. Common decency, let alone gratitude, should have restrained Mr. Montague's tongue.

There is the full range of human terror and heroism and pity in the story of the New Zealand earthquake. Some hundreds of lives have been lost, and much property damaged, in the lovely Hawke's Bay region, where Napier, one of the younger cities of the Dominion, lies facing the eastern Pacific Ocean. The published accounts suggest that the town will have to be almost entirely rebuilt.

The whole North Island of New Zealand is, of course, volcanic, and the conformation of the country shows a geological fault running through from Napier to Wellington. But in the ninety years of its history the country has been fortunate in suffering little loss of life from earthquake shock, and this relative immunity has probably led to a more solid type of architecture in Napier—which has grown considerably of recent years—than was altogether wise.

There will be very general sympathy for the Archbishop of Canterbury, who has been stricken down with serious illness for the second time in two years. Apart from these personal considerations, however, some perturbation is being expressed among the clergy at the prospect of another prolonged absence of the Metropolitan.

Lambeth is not a sinecure, and although the two suffragan bishops attached to Canterbury can no doubt transact current administrative and diocesan work, it is not their business to deal with matters of high policy or the greater national and oversea interests of the Church. The spiritual side of the national life is likely to be adversely affected by this persistent ill-health of the Primate.

A soldier of my acquaintance, with the chivalry that one expects from a cavalryman, has been defending Mr. Hardiman's idea of a horse in the proposed equestrian statue to Lord Haig. Some of the critics, it will be remembered, declared that the alleged horse was more like a camel. That, says my military friend, is a grotesque exaggeration; and after carefully studying the reproductions in the picture papers, I am bound to agree.

Mr. Hardiman's idea of Haig may be a soldier that never was on sea or land, but his horse is definitely a horse. The trouble is, as my military critic sees it, that the horse is not the sort of animal they use at Aldershot; it is reined in tight, and prances with the sort of step one used to see in the old-fashioned carriage and pair. Now one only finds this kind of thing at Olympia. It looks as though Mr. Hardiman had taken a circus horse for a cavalry horse.

The conviction of the commercial traveller and bigamist, Rouse, for the murder of an unknown man by burning in a motor-car, has naturally given rise to some discussion during the week. The case presented several peculiar features, including an apparent absence of motive; but although I have not heard the actual finding of the jury criticized, there was some surprise expressed at the shortness of their deliberations after the summing-up by the judge.

It is possible, of course, that some personal point of evidence emerged in court which was not apparent in the Press reports. But I have also heard the point made by reasonable members of the public that the necessarily condensed newspaper accounts of the trial left them in some doubt whether a murder had been committed at all. For myself, I read little of the trial but the result, and I am content to rely on the fact that Mr. Justice Talbot is an experienced judge who would certainly not have missed a vital point in the case.

The attitude of the popular Press towards the Rouse trial was, if possible, more to be condemned than its behaviour on previous occasions of a like nature, but the extreme of bad taste and hypocrisy was surely reached by one gossip-writer, a peer, who observed on one page of a Sunday paper that on leaving the court he "repressed an impulse to hit out left and right in the crowd as they babbled and chatted," and on another lumped together a charity midnight matinée, a new cabaret, several cocktail parties and the Rouse trial as his week's amusements.

This sort of thing is lowering the whole tone of journalism, and it is the more regrettable that it should be written by men of birth, and presumably of education. As I pointed out a week or two ago, reports of this nature will inevitably bring a further censorship upon the Press. The lack of restraint in reporting the Russell case a few years ago caused the legislature to take action with regard to the reporting of divorce proceedings, and another outbreak like that of last week can but have similar consequences where the criminal law is concerned.

Sir Austen Chamberlain too, rarely speaks on foreign affairs in these days, but when he does it is always to some purpose. His statement at Chester last week that during the past two years Europe had very perceptibly slipped back towards insecurity is only too true, and much of the blame for this state of affairs lies at the door of his successor at the Foreign Office. I think it was Depretis who said that when he saw a cloud on the European horizon, he opened his umbrella and waited until it passed, but it aptly describes the attitude of Uncle Arthur.

Foreign affairs are regarded by the present Cabinet solely from the point of view of the party advantages at home which they may afford, and in these circumstances it is hardly surprising that British influence on the Continent has rapidly declined. This state of affairs has always meant a troubled Europe. For my own part, I hope that Sir Austen will take advantage of the first opportunity to press Mr. Henderson in the House of Commons for a statement of his attitude towards the leading foreign problems of the day.

The inquiry into the railway companies' wage reduction proposals continues its interminable course, and I understand that the National Wages Board is not expected to issue its findings until early next month. Two salient facts have emerged: that the companies' case has been badly presented from the time their programme was first published, and that the numerous comparisons they have put forward between the 1913 earnings and the existing and proposed scales are somewhat vitiated by the admitted fact that the pre-war level was too low.

It is a fact that railway employees are taking more, both actually and relatively, out of the industry, than before the war, and that stockholders are getting less, also actually and relatively. Trade depression is largely responsible for the position of the stockholders, combined with the fact, which boards of directors and general managers seem to have considerable difficulty in realizing, that for certain forms of transport the railway has become obsolescent, if not obsolete. Under existing conditions, it is impossible for the railway companies to earn the standard revenue to which they are legally entitled, but it seems open to argument whether some ten or eleven millions a year should be knocked off the wages bill so as to bring them nearer to the profit figure that Parliament has told them they may earn—if they can get it.

Meanwhile, the suggestion by one of the trade union leaders for writing down railway capital seems worthy of consideration. Since the post-armistice boom, immense sums have been written off the nominal capital of shipbuilding, engineering, armament, textile and other industrial concerns. There is no reason why the capital invested in the railway industry should be regarded as specially sacrosanct, while in any event ordinary stocks have already been written down by the market to much less than their nominal values, to which it seems highly unlikely that they will revert for a long time, if ever.

Mr. Scullin, the Australian Prime Minister, seems to have landed himself in a maze of barbed wire entanglements since his return. He did better

directing affairs over the telephone from a distance of 12,000 miles than he has done on the spot. When he was in England, Mr. Fenton and Mr. Lyons stood four square to the Extremists and did much to save Australia's credit. On his return he told the Extremists that he would have none of their fantastic and ruinous schemes, and straightway proceeded to throw over Mr. Lyons, of all people, in favour of Mr. Theodore, who has yet to clear himself of the Queensland charges on account of which he resigned.

On the morrow of this recall of Mr. Theodore, a by-election was fought in a constituency won by Labour fifteen months ago by nearly nine thousand majority. The verdict to-day is a complete reversal, and the anti-Labour majority is nearly nine thousand. That is doubtless a process Australia would repeat if there were a general election immediately. Undeterred by this warning, Mr. Scullin appeals against an award of the Arbitration Court reducing the basic wage. No sane economist doubts that the basic wage is responsible for a large part of Australia's trouble. Mr. Scullin's courage, like that of English politicians, fails him at the critical moment.

The Left in Spain is clearly engaged in a gigantic piece of bluff in its refusal to present candidates at the forthcoming elections. It is gambling on the king taking fright and falling back on another dictatorship, which the republicans believe would serve their turn excellently, while abstention from the polls would also help to disguise the weakness of the Left save in a few of the larger centres. In fact, the whole scheme argues weakness rather than strength, and may prove mistaken tactics in the end.

After all, the republicans cannot have it both ways, and if they want a Cortes, they must take part in the elections for it. In my own view they would do well to take warning from the so-called "Aventine Opposition" to Fascism, which merely covered itself with ridicule, and in the end was completely ignored by the Government. A solidly Conservative Cortes could make life very unpleasant for the Left for many a long year to come, as the latter will probably realize when the date of the elections draws nearer.

The more fashion changes, the more it is the same thing. The antiquaries have now discovered a lipstick in a villa that once belonged to Nero, and it is on record that a rouge-pot was unearthed not long ago at Ur of the Chaldees. One likes to think that Sarah used it when the angel called on her. Perhaps that was why she laughed—he may have thought it was the natural colour.

PRIZE PROVERBS FOR PALE POLITICIANS

I am Winston, of Westerham, Kent,
And I've said the strong thing that I meant:
A paralysed will
Only leads to a spill
And bones that are broken, not bent.
(Mr. Winston Churchill, speaking at Liverpool, said that England was suffering from paralysis of the will.)

CHURCHILL BLOWS THE GAFF

A FEW months ago Sir Oswald Mosley refused to remain in a Government that did not govern. Mr. Churchill has now refused to support an Opposition that does not oppose.

In both cases the political machines that run the parties have protested, and in both cases the amiable nonentities who hold the titular headship of the parties have made appropriate gestures of pained surprise. But while these rival boneless wonders have gesticulated after their kind, the public as a whole has applauded this exercise of private judgment. Politics have become unreal, and the plain man is grateful to the plain men who have openly admitted it.

What, then, is the matter? Mr. Churchill diagnoses the trouble as a paralysis of the national will, which is letting industry slip and Empire slide because the country has lost its grip on policy. His argument is not without points, and we should be the last to profess ourselves satisfied with the state of the nation or its attitude towards Dominions and dependencies.

But Mr. Churchill's diagnosis is incomplete. It seems to us that the people are pretty much what they have always been—honest and generous to a fault, and at once common-sensical and short-sighted when bereft of guidance. There is no evidence here of degeneration or paralysis, but a very definite realization that the nation is being bled but not led by those politicians who happen for the moment to occupy the position of leaders.

Can anyone say for a moment that the popular verdict is wrong? Consider the position. In the House of Commons we see a Government without a majority, one Opposition leader with a party but without a policy, and the other Opposition leader with a policy but without a party. Can any human being in his senses claim that salvation is to be had from any one of these, or two of these, or all three together? The public indifference to their speeches is the answer.

But the reason the public is indifferent is that there is nothing in the speeches except reservations and qualifications and perorations. There is not only no vision but no pluck in these laborious efforts to avoid real issues and to square the circle with hot air. When the public is upbraided for going dog-racing, it has at least the satisfaction of seeing some definite result. But in politics it never sees a result—the parliamentary debates represent an endless test match in which the batsmen no longer try to make runs and the bowlers no longer try to get wickets: it is "against the national interest" to hit hard or to throw in straight, and the result is an empty score-sheet, an empty pavilion and a bored field that has to be whipped into standing upright.

It is often said to-day that Parliament is going down. It is true in a sense, but only in the sense that lesser men are now going into politics, who think in terms of petty manoeuvres rather than great principles, and who follow the machine rather than use it. The public has found them out, and it turns with relief to the men who are really doing the work of the world in business, in science, in engineering and medicine—the men who are certain of themselves, and who refuse to water down their convictions to get a cheer from this

audience and to pick up a few votes from that village hall.

The public knows that it can get neither leadership nor even guidance from the average timid candidate who is equally frightened of the party headquarters at Westminster and the party headquarters in the constituency; and the country is ceasing to look for solutions, or even for a solatium from politics. This is not a paralysis of the will, but simply a democracy in despair of ever getting the right men to serve it. England has not lost her soul, but for the moment at least she has lost her statesmen.

It is in politics as in nature; where the invertebrates begin to dominate, the vertebrates have to fight or quit. When the boneless wonders get to the top, the men with backbone have to assert themselves or perish. Mr. Churchill's remedies may not be right—he has an unfortunate habit of saying too much, and thinking too little—but we are at least grateful to him for having exposed by a single act and a single speech the melancholy unreality of contemporary politics. The fog of pretence must be dispersed before the future of passive resistance can be conquered.

MAN OR THE SABBATH

AT a time when unemployment, with its myriad political and economic ramifications, is clearly the most pressing problem of the age, it is not a little disconcerting to find that the question of what one may or may not do on Sunday should have become one of the most fiercely disputed topics of the hour. The London County Council is now obeying a law passed in the reign of George III, and refusing to license the Sunday opening of cinemas—a form of entertainment that only began a hundred years after Farmer George was dead. A prominent citizen of Manchester has been admonished for failing to go to church on Sunday in conformity with an Act of Parliament passed in the reign of Charles II. It has, so our foreign critics tell us, ever been one of the most prominent characteristics of our fellow-countrymen to refuse to look facts in the face, and in the present instance we find it difficult not to agree with this observation, for in our opinion the controversy as to the proper keeping of the Sabbath bears about as much relation to the real issues of the moment as the old dispute regarding the number of angels that could conveniently dance upon the point of a needle. Nevertheless, the problem has been raised, and it must now be settled in a manner consonant with the habits and customs of the vast mass of the population in this fourth decade of the twentieth century.

Those who would have us return to the ways of our forefathers not only, it seems to us, forget the divine injunction that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, but they also live in a world of their own imagining. The motor-car and the golf-course, to mention but two modern amusements, have caused thousands to depart from that idea of Sunday which was traditional with the Victorians, and the movement is proceeding apace. The law cannot prevent the man with money from using it for his own amusement on the first, as on any other, day of the week: all it can do is to close the cinema to those less fortunately situated, and so drive them into the street or public-house. It would, no doubt, be an edifying

spectacle to witness the whole adult population of England flocking to church or chapel twice every Sunday, but it is one which would never be seen even if all places of amusement and refreshment were closed. This being so, the whole argument for a strict Sabbatarianism falls to the ground. People do not stay away from church because the cinema proves a stronger attraction, but because they do not wish to go to church. The real alternative, in fact, is not the cinema or the place of worship, but the cinema or (especially for the younger generation) the streets and open spaces.

The fact is, of course, that religion, like politics, is at something of a discount in these days; there are too many counter-attractions. The advantages of the Parliamentary System seemed obvious when it was synonymous with low taxation and general prosperity, but in an age of crushing taxes and universal depression, the merits of a spending machine are by no means so conspicuous. It is much the same with religion. Its exponents are divided among themselves to such an extent that the ordinary man asks, with Pilate, "What is truth?" and a confused babble of tongues is all that he hears in reply. The Church of Rome holds its congregations in a way that is at once the despair and the admiration of all other Christian bodies, but the latter can only record a steady decrease in membership as the years go by. What, in these circumstances, is the use of employing ancient Acts of Parliament to prevent people who will never go to church from enjoying themselves in a harmless manner at a cinematograph entertainment? It is the lack of faith in the world to-day that has emptied the churches, and the whole lesson of two thousand years of Christian history proves that the arm of the law, even in the shape of an *auto-da-fé*, can never restore a faith that is gone. Of the counter-attractions to religion the most powerful is science, and when the priest can, by persuasion and not by force, once again number the scientist even among the nominally faithful, he will have gone a long way towards refilling his church.

For the younger people of to-day, who will be the majority to-morrow, Sunday is neither more nor less than a holiday. The man or woman who has spent the week poring over a ledger, or serving behind a counter in a shop, regards it as an opportunity for relaxation, whatever form this may take. Those who would dispute the fact would do well to attend some place of worship next Sunday, and estimate the average age of the congregation, which we will wager to be nearer fifty than forty. It may be a platitude that the present is a strenuous age, but it is none the less true, and those to whom the week has either been a rush or a bore are determined that their one free day shall be a change from their usual occupation. The puritan may hold up his hands in horror at such depravity, but the truth is that the idea of social duty has changed. A generation ago it was "the thing" to attend a religious service on Sunday; now the humbugs have fallen out, and those who go may be assumed to attend divine service for the proper purpose—the worship of God and the edification of man.

The long and short of it is that the laws

relating to Sabbath observance are obsolete, and the sooner they are reformed, in a manner more in keeping with the spirit of the age, the better. We doubt if any sane person would contend that the Frenchman and the Italian are necessarily more depraved because some form of rational amusement is open to them on a Sunday, and we have too high an opinion of the English youth of to-day to believe that an outbreak of license would follow the removal of the present restrictions.

IMPERIAL FEDERATION

BY THE HON. QUINTIN HOGG

IT was remarked, almost ad nauseam at the time, that the Imperial Conference of 1926 left the question of Imperial relations in rather an anomalous position. By the Declaration which issued from the conference the Dominions and the United Kingdom were defined to be a freely associated group of autonomous communities, in no way subordinate to one another. Nevertheless, the legal position remained unchanged. The Colonial Laws Validity Act remained on the Statute Book: colonial laws were still to be read subject to the Imperial statutes extending to the Colonies; the Imperial Parliament still retained the legal right to legislate afresh for any or all of the Dominions.

One outcome—the only outcome, it appears—of the recent conference is the decision to pass a so-called "Statute of Westminster" (what a degradation of an historic name!) abolishing this legal right. In answer to criticism in the House of Lords the Lord Chancellor told their lordships that the new statute would make no difference in the practical situation.

There are, however, two advantages in the system soon to be repealed which it is doubtful if the new legislation will possess. The first is that if an emergency should arise demanding in a short time the establishment of a central authority for the whole Empire, there already exists a body, the Imperial Parliament, which, without any preliminary formalities and without any violation of existing understandings, could immediately step into that position, provided that the other Dominions acquiesced in its doing so. No doubt the possibility of such an emergency is remote: but if it arose, it would be a matter of life and death. There is, so far as we are aware, no provision for such a contingency in the new statute.

The second advantage of the present situation is illustrated by the practice which has grown up whereby the Imperial Parliament passes an Act conferring certain Imperial Powers upon the Dominion Legislatures, provided that they themselves adopt as part of their municipal law certain provisions contained in the Act. Thus an Act of 1914 grants to any Dominion the right to confer British nationality valid over the whole Empire upon aliens, provided that the Act is adopted by the Dominion legislatures. Such matters as copyright are also dealt with in this manner, and the existence of a large system of common rights extending over the Empire is a factor the power of which to promote Imperial sentiment may easily be underestimated. There is, so far as we are aware, no provision for this in the new legislation. Such measures would be impossible if there were not a body capable of conferring rights legally valid over the whole Empire.

The Lord Chancellor's statement should therefore be taken with a pinch of salt. But far more interesting than speculations as to the accuracy of the statements made by ministers is the question how the damage which the Government has done to the structure of the Empire may be best repaired.

We may reject as impractical the suggestion that the new legislation should be repealed. Thoughts, there-

fore, turn naturally to the question of Imperial Federation.

Unfortunately the problem is one which presents stupendous difficulties, and previous attempts to solve those difficulties have had a discouraging record of failure.

At the moment, however, there is at least one new factor which is in favour of the movement. Nowhere is it so true as in constitutional matters that where there's a will there's a way. The new legislation will, at any rate, remove some of the psychological factors which have so far militated against success.

Hitherto Federation has been unpopular with the Imperialist because it abandons Britain's position as head of the Empire; with the Little Englander, because Federation means that we should no longer be politically independent of the will of our Dominions; with the Dominion Nationalist, because he is jealous for his national development.

This, at least, will be true no more. The position of this country as head of the Empire is to be abolished by the new legislation; our evil economic position will justify a political sacrifice: Dominion national development is complete and can never be destroyed. What will exist all over the Empire is a feeling that we have gone a little too far, and a desire to embody in a legal form some kind of Imperial bond.

There is another argument against federation—a good one in its day—which will also disappear. It has been said hitherto that it is undesirable to legislate in these matters, when it is far more in accordance with the English genius to arrange them by Convention and understanding. That is true: but the new legislation has already committed that mistake in such a way that it can only be remedied by fresh legislation.

Dacey defines the conditions necessary to a successful federation as follows: "There must exist a body of countries . . . so closely connected by locality, by history, by race, or the like as to be capable of bearing in the eyes of their inhabitants an impress of common nationality. . . . A second condition . . . is the existence of a very peculiar state of sentiment among the inhabitants of the countries which it is proposed to unite. They must desire Union and must not desire Unity." Can anyone say that these conditions are not fulfilled in the British Empire? Only the practical difficulties loom large and horrid.

II

What, then, does Imperial Federation imply? It implies a central Imperial authority in which Great Britain, though adequately represented, would not be in majority, and it implies a definite legal status to be enjoyed by that authority. This Imperial Assembly would probably be elected by the Parliaments of the Empires, and would probably contain representatives of the various Opposition parties.

However difficult of achievement such a plan may be, it is easy to overestimate the difficulties by mistaking their nature. It is, for instance, no objection to say that such a body could meet but seldom and transact but little business. The analogy of modern British Parliaments should not lead us to despise a body meeting, let us say, every three or four years, and passing but one important measure when it did so. Reference to our own parliamentary history will correct that error: we must, however, bear constantly in mind that politically the most we can hope for is a loose confederation. We do not desire a United States of the British Empire, and if we did we should not get it.

The real problem arises when, having assumed the existence of the legislature, it is necessary to discuss its powers. The problem may be put as follows: if the powers are small, the new authority is no real advance on the present Imperial Conference: if they

are great, no one will accept the plan. Nevertheless, it seems that two functions might usefully be performed by such a body, and that these functions would not be unduly unpopular with the various States. They are the two functions which, it was suggested, were at the moment in the hands of the Parliament at Westminster.

In the first place it is necessary that there should be a body with Imperial powers to legislate in the event of a war in which the Dominions had consented to take part. In the second it is desirable that the various legal questions such as are at the moment partly covered, for instance, by the Copyright Act of 1911, the Nationality and Status of Aliens Act, 1914, and the British Law Ascertainment Act—matters, that is, which are not of first-rate controversial importance but which go far to make for United Empire—should be subject again to a single authority. It is hardly likely that this suggestion would be the subject of insuperable difficulties.

But are we to give our Empire Parliament no further powers? It would seem at first that the dilemma propounded before was final. Are measures, other than those suggested, to depend for their validity upon their adoption by the local authorities, or are they to be of absolute validity the moment they are passed by the Empire Parliament? If the first, where is the improvement on the Imperial Conference: if the second, what chance is there of the plan becoming law?

Two things, however, should be borne in mind. The first is that even if the functions of the Imperial Assembly were not much greater than the present Imperial Conference, the presence of members of the Opposition parties, anxious to secure some agreement to their credit, might render Empire Union less at the mercy of the Jack in Office than it is at the moment. The second is that even if the functions of the Assembly were merely probouleutic: i.e., if the Assembly submitted for adoption not plans but bills, which became law on a simple resolution of both Houses, its influence would be greater than that of the Imperial Conference.

Moreover, it should be remembered that whatever the disadvantage of a referendum in domestic politics, it might quite easily become a valuable weapon in the hands of Empire if it were enacted that when a measure was rejected by a Dominion legislature or by Parliament, it should be subjected to a referendum of the people concerned.

The disadvantages of the referendum in internal politics are obvious: if it is given to the Government to demand it, it ceases to be a check on legislature and becomes a means of avoiding responsibility: if it is given to the Opposition, it becomes a weapon of obstruction and party warfare: if it is given to the electorate on a petition, it becomes the instrument of irresponsibility in politics. (How the Press lords would use it!) If, however, the right were exercised by none of these, but by a Parliament of Empire, none of the more obvious objections remains.

In conclusion, a scheme of Federation would be part and parcel of the system of closer economic union which the Dominions desire—and even Ireland might fear the economic consequences of exclusion. In England it would have at least the advantage of removing Imperial questions a little from the sphere of party politics (it is monstrous that a party like the Labour Party, which owes its popularity to purely internal questions, should have the power of ruining the Empire) and although difficulties of immense importance remain undiscussed (what part, for instance, is India to play in the Federation, consistent with her size and without swamping the rest of us?), it is clear that the time for constructive statesmanship has come; if the opportunity is not taken, it will soon be too late, for great empires and little minds go ill together.

WHITEWASH FOR THE BIRDS: FRIEND OR FOE OF THE FARMER?

By SIR WILLIAM BEACH THOMAS

IT is pleasant to feel that our neighbours in this world, and island, especially the birds, are both friendly and useful; and therefore a recent whitewashing of even the less reputable characters should add to our happiness. Nevertheless, truth should prevail, as it will, and it is incumbent on us to make sure of the distinction between friend and enemy, that we may not multiply the goats at the expense of the sheep.

The whitewash has been chiefly applied by scientific enquirers, with Professor Collinge at their head. But even so great a man of science may be wrong—not in his facts but in the deduced moral. That energetic and engaging alien the little owl was said to eat beetles, or very little else. Sir John Court-hope, a great game preserver, was inclined to corroborate the evidence, when he and his keepers made the singular discovery that the owls killed young birds to serve as traps for the burying beetles! The discovery is one of the most singular of recent years. Again, the rook, which is a specialist on the consumption of the daddy-long-legs and its damaging caterpillar, ceases to be a friend (as much evidence from Hungary proves) as soon as his numbers exceed the norm. He then develops the traits of his cousins the carrion crows and magpies. If you study the food of the sparrow in April, you will say, "Here is a friend indeed," but go visit a Warwickshire wheatfield in August and you will find the sparrow to be a harpy. Old and young have emigrated for a holiday from Birmingham and made as great a mess of the verges of the wheatfields as a bank holiday crowd of the Yarmouth foreshore. The list of British birds extends to hundreds, of which none, perhaps, is always an enemy and very few always friendly. There are seasonal friends and enemies, local friends and enemies, indiscriminate friends and enemies. Where shall we find any generalization that will excuse a complete list with a special label for each?

The task is not perhaps quite so difficult as it may seem. Certainly some general truths may be ventured. All birds do good service on behalf of mankind in the spring, thanks to the happy truth that young birds for the most part require animal food. As the earth grows yeasty with fly and beetle and grub emerging from the egg or chrysalis, all birds fall to the seasonal feast. Even the rather ruthless Bismarck found leisure at a time of political crisis to count the number of caterpillars that parent tits brought to their many and greedy young within an hour. Cut open the anthills that begin to deface your meadow and partridges will gather from many parishes. The marsh or fen farms of South Lincolnshire, where birds are few because hedges and coverts are few, have been saved by pheasants, specially introduced, and by starlings and plover. I would risk the contention that every single summer visitor to Britain is beneficial, partly because of the date; for most birds nest at the northern limit of migration and go south again when insect food fails. In the company of these are the more inveterate flesh-eaters among our own small birds, especially the wren and the robin. In mid-winter no bird, if we except a few big birds of prey, can do much harm, on the land at any rate. Starlings may foul a particular roosting-place to the annoyance of the owner, and larks, as well as starlings and rooks, occasionally make rather a mess of the tidy lines of wheat; but there the list of damages ends.

This may sound as if the whitewashers had things

all their own way; and it is hardly to be questioned that a huge proportion of birds do more good than harm and should be allowed to do their little harm for the sake of the much good. Certainly it may be laid down that every bird should be regarded as a benefactor till it is proved to be a villain. This happy truth reduces the need of an analysis to small proportions. All we need is an *Index Expurgatorius*; and its proportions are manageable—can, indeed, be contracted even into the space of a column or so.

A very urban friend of mine used to classify all birds as "eagles, sparrows and domestic fowls." With as little scientific justification let me, class them as small and big: thrushes or smaller and jays or bigger. In class one, certain particular charges have been brought against the following: great tits and blue tits, several finches, especially bullfinches, sparrows, blackbirds and thrushes, larks, starlings, and perhaps one ought to add kingfishers, for the sake of completing the list. It is beyond argument that the tits and bullfinches will on occasion attack the buds of fruit trees and pull them clean out, fruit buds and leaf buds, indiscriminately. I have seen trees so devastated by chaffinches (which are not generally classed as destructive) that the owner, who incidentally was a well-known botanist and ornithologist, thought that the trees would be killed. They survived, in spite of his fears, but there was no question of fruit. It is often argued that such birds are seeking deleterious bugs within the buds, but I fear, not to put too fine a point on it, that the argument will not wash, nor the birds accept whitewashing. We must, I think, confess that in some few places in occasional years fruitgrowers suffer much more than they gain from tits and finches. Perhaps both tits and chaffinches have multiplied too greatly, the tits thanks to the very special provision of exclusive nesting places and food, the chaffinches simply because they are singularly efficient struggle-for-lifers. As to greenfinches, which are hardly less common, I have seen vast flocks assemble in the neighbourhood of seed-crops—a particular crop of seed mangolds in Norfolk is in my mind. They certainly played the harpy there, and the owner shot over a hundred within a day or two. It is a general rule that where any one crop is massed—fruit in orchards, daffodils or carrots in beds—there the harpies are gathered together; generally insect harpies, but sometimes birds and beasts. Finches gather to seed-harvests and sparrows to wheat as flies do to apple blossoms and white grubs to bulbs or biennial food-stores. It follows that in such places, which are exceptional, peculiar measures of repression are or may be necessary. A producer must face loss, if he allows the assembling of blackbirds and even thrushes to his strawberries or cherries in June or bullfinches to his plum trees in March or sparrows to his wheat (or crocuses) in August. Happily the destructive period is short and other means of protection than destruction may be available.

The list of enemies in the second class of big birds represents a larger percentage, but is not long. Let the very big birds be omitted, for they are few. Golden eagles, which enjoy grouse, peregrines, which prefer ducks, buzzards, which live on rabbits, and ravens that will kill small birds. Some few people in the West of England begin to ask for their limitation, but without sufficient reason. Particular crimes are imputed, justifiably, to several varieties of hawk, especially the sparrow owls and especially the tawny, and that pernicious alien the

little owl, the carrion crow, rook, magpie and jay, the wood-pigeon, and a large number of fish-eating birds, especially heron, cormorant and shag and greater black-backed gull, but birds as different as the swan, gannets, merganser, goosander, and even tern as well as kingfisher from the smaller class, are included by some fishermen. Most of us would expect the Ancient Mariner's curse to fall on us if we killed either heron or kingfisher. Doubtless swans and duck both destroy fish ova, but we do not desire their banishment for this reason. As for the fishers in the sea, they deal in a spacious and well-filled market where there should be enough for all, unless the numbers of raiders become altogether extravagant. Of all birds in the British list perhaps the greater black-backed gull is in character the most ruthless savage. It will rob even a seal of its fish, as I know from experience, and drive its beak into the side of any wounded or hampered bird it may see. One can hardly make a plea for it; but generally—with a few local exceptions—we may allow all the fish-eating birds free play of their natural function without much loss, even in the judgment of the greediest fisher. How repulsive a spectacle it is to see the Spanish fishermen kill the guillemots that come to their nets!

So we come to the small class of land thieves whom our Shylocks fear; for "there be land rats and water rats, water thieves and land thieves, I mean pirates." The little owl, introduced by Lord Lilford and others from Spain, is a pirate, and were as well in exile. Quite certainly, so high is its intellectual skill, it kills young birds, and even grown birds. The carrion crow, which seems to have been protected by the suburbs of big towns, will wipe out broods of chickens—I have seen the deed done both in England and British Columbia—if the coops are left in the open. The magpie may be as bad. Of all birds, rooks have been most closely studied and there is no doubt at all that they are normally of great economic value; but as soon as they grow very numerous they change their habits. Most hawks, as most owls, will kill on occasion, and are not beloved of game preservers, though their chief fare is mice and beetles, but now the barn-owl is generally spared and less often the kestrel; knowledge and good sense grow. The sparrowhawk and tawny owl kill more birds than the rest, and the artificial conditions of our urban civilization seem to be multiplying owls beyond a reasonable limit. But all the hawks are too few rather than too many, and from any point of view not numerous enough to be a general threat.

A bird in a class by itself is the wood-pigeon. Its appetite is of incredible proportions. It will gorge like a goat on Brussels sprouts or clover, as I have tested not once or twice, taking in as much as half a pint at a time. Great flocks come over and join our native birds in winter; and if we countenance sport at all, the farmers' shoots of wood-pigeons, in some years encouraged by public authority, are well justified.

And what is the conclusion of the whole matter? That birds are an inestimable blessing—economically and æsthetically both. Not more than three or four sorts do any general damage: sparrows, little owls, carrion crows, with perhaps magpies, almost complete the list, though in this place and that at odd seasons a good many qualify the good they do elsewhere and at other seasons. Excessive multiplication generally alters habit for the worse economically. If we were to make a list of pious benefactors it would take twenty times the space of the expurgatory index, and the order of merit would be difficult. Personally, I should begin with the green plover, the warblers, robins and wrens, and the pheasant, which devours the most pernicious grub in the farmer's list.

MEDITATION ON EL GRECO

BY ALDOUS HUXLEY

I

THE pleasures of ignorance are as great, in their way, as the pleasures of knowledge. For though the light is good, though it is satisfying to be able to place the things that surround one in the categories of an ordered and comprehensible system, it is also good to find oneself sometimes in the dark, it is pleasant now and then to have to speculate with vague bewilderment about a world which ignorance has reduced to a quantity of mutually irrelevant happenings dotted, like so many unexplored and fantastic islands, on the face of a vast ocean of incomprehension. For me, one of the greatest charms of travel consists in the fact that it offers unique opportunities for indulging in the luxury of ignorance. I am not one of those conscientious travellers who, before they visit a new country, spend weeks mugging up its geology, its economics, its art history, its literature. I prefer, at any rate during my first few visits, to be a thoroughly unintelligent tourist. It is only later, when my ignorance has lost its virgin freshness, that I begin to read what the intelligent tourist would have known by heart before he bought his tickets. I read—and forthwith, in a series of apocalypses, my isolated and mysteriously odd impressions begin to assume significance, my jumbled memories fall harmoniously into patterns. The pleasures of ignorance have given place to the pleasures of knowledge.

I have only twice visited Spain—not often enough, that is to say, to have grown tired of ignorance. I still enjoy bewilderedly knowing as little as possible about all I see between the Pyrenees and Cape Trafalgar. Another two or three visits, and the time will be ripe for me to go to the London Library and look up "Spain" in the subject index. In one of the numerous, the all too numerous, books there catalogued I shall find, no doubt, the explanation of a little mystery that has mildly and intermittently puzzled me for quite a number of years—ever since, at one of those admirable Loan Exhibitions in Burlington House, I saw for the first time a version of El Greco's 'Dream of Philip II.'

This curious composition, familiar to every visitor to the Escorial, represents the king, dressed and gloved like an undertaker in inky black, kneeling on a well-stuffed cushion in the centre foreground; beyond him, on the left, a crowd of pious kneelers, some lay, some clerical, but all manifestly saintly, are looking upwards into a heaven full of waltzing angels, cardinal virtues and biblical personages, grouped in a circle round the Cross and the luminous monogram of the Saviour. On the right a very large whale gigantically yawns, and a vast concourse, presumably of the damned, is hurrying (in spite of all that we learned in childhood about the anatomy of whales) down its crimson throat. A curious picture, I repeat, and, as a work of art, not remarkably good; there are many much better Grecos belonging even to the same youthful period. Nevertheless, in spite of its mediocrity, it is a picture for which I have a special weakness. I like it for the now sadly unorthodox reason that the subject interests me. And the subject interests me because I do not know what the subject is. For this dream of King Philip—what was it? Was it a visionary anticipation of the Last Judgment? A mystical peep into Heaven? An encouraging glimpse of the Almighty's short way with heretics? I do not know—do not at present even desire to know. In the face of so extravagant a phantasy as this of Greco's the pleasures of ignorance are peculiarly intense. Confronted by the mysterious whale, the undertaker

king, the swarming aerial saints and scurrying sinners, I give my fancy licence and fairly wallow in the pleasure of bewilderedly not knowing.

The fancy I like best of all that have occurred to me is the one which affirms that this queer picture was painted as a prophetic and symbolical autobiography, that it was meant to summarize hieroglyphically the whole of Greco's future development. For that whale in the right foreground—that great-grandfather of Moby Dick, with his huge yawn, his crimson gullet and the crowd of the damned descending, like bank clerks at six o'clock into the Underground—that whale, I say, is the most significantly autobiographical object in all El Greco's early pictures. For whither are they bound, those hastening damned? "Down the red lane," as our nurses used to say when they were encouraging us to swallow the uneatable viands of childhood. Down the red lane into a dim inferno of tripes. Down, in a word, into that strange and rather frightful universe which Greco's spirit seems to have come more and more exclusively, as he grew older, to inhabit. For in the Cretan's later painting every personage is a Jonah. Yes, every personage. Which is where 'The Dream of Philip II' reveals itself as being imperfectly prophetic, a mutilated symbol. It is for the damned alone that the whale opens his mouth. If El Greco had wanted to tell the whole truth about his future development, he would have sent the blessed to join them, or at least have provided his saints and angels with another monster of their own, a supernal whale floating head downwards among the clouds, with a second red lane ascending, strait and narrow, towards a swallowed Heaven. Paradise and Purgatory, Hell and even the common Earth—for El Greco in his artistic maturity, every department of the universe was situated in the belly of a whale. His Annunciations and Assumptions, his Agonies and Transfigurations and Crucifixions, his Martyrdoms and Stigmatizations are all without exception visceral events. Heaven is no larger than the Black Hole of Calcutta, and God Himself is whale-engulfed.

II

Critics have tried to explain El Greco's pictorial agoraphobia in terms of his early Cretan education. There is no space in his pictures, they assure us, because the typical art of that Byzantium, which was El Greco's spiritual home, was the mosaic, and the mosaic is innocent of depth. A specious explanation, whose only defect is that it happens to be almost entirely beside the point. To begin with, the Byzantine mosaic was not invariably without depth. Those extraordinary eighth-century mosaics in the Omeyyid mosque at Damascus, for example, are as spacious and airy as impressionist landscapes. They are, it is true, somewhat exceptional specimens of the art. But even the commoner shut-in mosaics have really nothing to do with El Greco's painting. For the Byzantine Saints and Kings are enclosed or, to be more accurate, are flatly inlaid in a kind of two-dimensional abstraction—in a pure Euclidean, plane-geometrical heaven of gold or blue. Their universe never bears the smallest resemblance to that whale's belly in which every one of El Greco's personages has his or her mysterious and appalling being. El Greco's world is no Flatland; there is depth in it—just a little depth. It is precisely this that makes it seem such a disquieting world. In their two-dimensional abstraction the personages of the Byzantine mosaics are perfectly at home; they are adapted to their environment. But solid and three-dimensional, made to be the inhabitants of a spacious universe, El Greco's people are shut up in a world where there is perhaps just room enough to swing a cat, but no more. They are in prison and, which makes it worse, in a visceral prison. For all that surrounds them is organic, animal. Clouds, rock,

drapery have all been mysteriously transformed into mucus and skinned muscle and peritoneum. The Heaven into which Count Orgaz ascends is like some cosmic operation for appendicitis. The Madrid 'Resurrection' is a resurrection in a digestive tube. And from the later pictures we receive the gruesome impression that all the personages, both human and divine, have begun to suffer a process of digestion, are being gradually assimilated to their visceral surroundings. Even in the Madrid 'Resurrection' the forms and texture of the naked flesh have assumed a strangely tripe-like aspect. In the case of the nudes in 'Laocoon' and 'The Opening of the Seventh Seal' (both of them works of El Greco's last years) this process of assimilation has been carried a good deal further. After seeing their draperies and the surrounding landscape gradually peptonized and transformed, the unhappy Jonahs of Toledo discover, to their horror, that they themselves are being digested. Their bodies, their arms and legs, their faces, fingers, toes are ceasing to be humanly their own; they are becoming—the process is slow but inexorably sure—part of the universal Whale's internal workings. It is lucky for them that El Greco died when he did. Twenty years more, and the Trinity, the Communion of Saints and all the human race would have found themselves reduced to hardly distinguishable excrescences on the surface of a cosmic gut. The most favoured might perhaps have aspired to be taenias and trematodes.

III

For myself I am very sorry that El Greco did not live to be as old as Titian. At eighty or ninety he would have been producing an almost abstract art—a cubism without cubes, organic, purely visceral. What pictures he would then have painted! Beautiful, thrilling, profoundly appalling. For appalling are even the pictures he painted in middle age, dreadful in spite of their extraordinary power and beauty. This swallowed universe into which he introduces us is one of the most disquieting creations of the human mind. One of the most puzzling too. For what were El Greco's reasons for driving mankind down the red lane? What induced him to take God out of His boundless Heaven and shut Him up in a fish's gut? One can only obscurely speculate. All that I am quite certain of is that there were profounder and more important reasons for the whale than the memory of the mosaics—the wholly unvisceral mosaics—which he may have seen in the course of a Cretan childhood, a Venetian and Roman youth. Nor will a disease of the eye account, as some have claimed, for his strange artistic development. Diseases must be very grave indeed before they become completely co-extensive with their victims. That men are affected by their illnesses is obvious; but it is no less obvious that, except when they are almost in *extremis*, they are something more than the sum of their morbid symptoms. Dostoevsky was not merely personified epilepsy, Keats was other things besides a simple lump of pulmonary tuberculosis. Men make use of their illnesses at least as much as they are made use of by them. It is likely enough that El Greco had something wrong with his eyes. But other people have had the same disease without for that reason painting pictures like the 'Laocoon' and 'The Opening of the Seventh Seal.' To say that El Greco was just a defective eyesight is absurd; he was a man who used a defective eyesight.

Used it for what purpose? To express what strange feeling about the world, what mysterious philosophy? It is hard indeed to answer. For El Greco belongs as a metaphysician (every significant artist is a metaphysician, a propounder of beauty-truths and form-theories) to no known school. The most one can say, by way of classification, is that, like most of the great artists of the Baroque, he believed in

the validity of ecstasy, of the non-rational, "numinous" experiences out of which, as a raw material, the reason fashions the gods or the various attributes of God. But the kind of ecstatic experience artistically rendered and meditated on by El Greco was quite different from the kind of experience which is described and symbolically "rationalized" in the painting, sculpture and architecture of the great Baroque artists of the *seicento*. Those mass-producers of spirituality, the Jesuits, had perfected a simple technique for the fabrication of orthodox ecstasies. They had cheapened an experience, hitherto accessible only to the spiritually wealthy, and so placed it within the reach of all. What the Italian *seicento* artists so brilliantly and copiously rendered was this cheapened experience and the metaphysic in terms of which it could be rationalized. "St. Teresa for All," "A John of the Cross in every Home." Such were, or might have been, their slogans. Was it to be wondered at if their sublimities were a trifle theatrical, their tendernesses treacherous, their spiritual intuitions rather commonplace and vulgar? Even the greatest of the Baroque artists were not remarkable for subtlety and spiritual refinement.

IV

With these rather facile ecstasies and the orthodox Counter-Reformation theology in terms of which they could be interpreted El Greco has nothing to do. The bright reassuring Heaven, the smiling or lachrymose, but always all too human divinities, the stage immensities and stage mysteries, all the stock in trade of the *seicentisti* are absent from his pictures. There is an ecstasy and fiery aspiration; but always ecstasy and aspiration, as we have seen, within the belly of a whale. El Greco seems to be talking all the time about the physiological root of ecstasy, not the spiritual flower; about the primary corporeal facts of numinous experience, not the mental derivatives from them. However vulgarly, the artists of the Baroque were concerned with the flower, not the root, with the derivatives and theological interpretations, not the brute facts of immediate physical experience. Not that they were ignorant of the physiological nature of these primary facts. Bernini's astonishing 'St. Teresa' proclaims it in the most unequivocal fashion; and it is interesting to note that in this statue (as well as in the very similar and equally astonishing 'Ludovica Albertoni' in San Francesco a Ripa) he gives to the draperies a kind of organic, and, I might say, intestinal lusciousness of form. A little softened, smoothed and simplified, the robe of the great mystic would be indistinguishable from the rest of the swallowed landscape inside El Greco's whale. Bernini saves the situation (from the Counter-Reformer's point of view) by introducing into his composition the figure of the dart-brandishing angel. This aerial young creature is the inhabitant of an unswallowed Heaven. He carries with him the implication of infinite spaces. Charming and a little preposterously (the hand which holds the fiery dart has a delicately crooked little finger, like the hand of some too refined young person in the act of raising her tea-cup), the angel symbolizes the spiritual flower of ecstasy, whose physiological root is the swooning Teresa in her peritoneal robe. Bernini is, spiritually speaking, a *plein-airiste*.

Not so El Greco. So far as he is concerned, there is nothing outside the whale. The primary physiological fact of religious experience is also, for him, the final fact. He remains consistently on the plane of that visceral consciousness which we so largely ignore, but with which our ancestors (as their language proves) did so much of their feeling and thinking. "Where is thy zeal and thy strength,

the sounding of the bowels and of thy mercies towards me?" "My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." "I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night season." "For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." "For Thou hast possessed my reins." "Is Ephraim my dear son? Therefore my bowels are troubled for him." The Bible abounds in such phrases—phrases which strike the modern reader as queer, a bit indelicate, even repellent. We are accustomed to thinking of ourselves as thinking entirely with our heads. Wrongly, as the physiologists have shown. For what we think and feel and are is to a great extent determined by the state of our ductless glands and our viscera. The Psalmist drawing instruction from his reins, the Apostle with his yearning bowels are thoroughly in the modern physiological movement.

El Greco lived at a time when the reality of the primary visceral consciousness was still recognized—when the heart and the liver, the spleen and reins did all a man's feeling for him, and the four humours of blood, phlegm, choler and melancholy determined his character and imposed his passing moods. Even the loftiest experiences were admitted to be primarily physiological. Teresa knew God in terms of an exquisite pain in her heart, her side, her bowels. But while Teresa, and along with her the generality of human beings, found it natural to pass from the realm of physiology into that of the spirit—from the belly of the whale out into the wide open sky—El Greco obstinately insisted on remaining swallowed. His meditations were all of religious experience and ecstasy—but always of religious experience in its raw physiological state, always of primary, immediate, visceral ecstasy. He expressed these meditations in terms of Christian symbols—of symbols, that is to say, habitually employed to describe experiences quite different from the primary physiological states on which he was accustomed to dwell. It is the contrast between these symbols, with their currently accepted significance, and the special private use to which El Greco puts them—it is this strange contrast which gives to El Greco's pictures their peculiarly disquieting quality. For the Christian symbols remind us of all the spiritual open spaces—the open spaces of altruistic feeling, the open spaces of abstract thought, the open spaces of free-floating spiritual ecstasy. El Greco imprisons them, claps them up in a fish's gut. The symbols of the spiritual open spaces are compelled by him to serve as a language in terms of which he talks about the close immediacies of visceral awareness, about the ecstasy that annihilates the personal soul, not by dissolving it out into universal infinity, but by drawing it down and drowning it in the warm, pulsating, tremulous darkness of the body.

Well, I have wandered far and fancifully from the undertaker king and his enigmatic nightmare of whales and Jonahs. But imaginative wandering is the privilege of the ignorant. When one doesn't know, one is free to invent. I have seized the opportunity while it presented itself. One of these days I may discover what the picture is about, and when that has happened, I shall no longer be at liberty to impose my own interpretations. Imaginative criticism is essentially an art of ignorance. It is only because we don't know what a writer or artist meant to say that we are free to concoct meanings of our own. If El Greco had somewhere specifically told us what he meant to convey by painting in terms of Black Holes of Calcutta and undulating mucus, I should not now be in a position to speculate. But luckily he never told us; I am justified in letting my fancy loose to wander.

KREISLER

BY ROBIN H. LEGGE

Fritz Kreisler occupies a peculiar and distinctive place among his contemporary violinists. One may hear him described as at once the "greatest" of all violinists, a cheapjack, a "perfect" artist and a money grubber. That opinions vary so widely is in itself a sign of a greatly changed mental attitude towards a practical musician. In the days of Joachim folk went out to hear him play in much the same spirit as that in which they went to some religious ceremony. Those were the great days of snobbism in music. Joachim stood for all that was noble and "great" and not the slightest notice was taken of the fact that, at any rate in his later days, he played lamentably out of tune. He was Joachim. That sufficed.

But in these later days folk, especially the younger folk, are much more independent in their views and much more outspoken in their expression. Whether or not this criticism is of any value whatever is another matter. Probably not. The "Bright Young Man" of to-day is no brighter than was his ancestor of a couple of generations ago. But there are more of him and the chorus is louder because of this. It is in point of fact a matter of quantity rather than of quality. It seems to me certain that were Kreisler to play the violin as Joachim played towards the end of his days, his younger hearers would have none of him, not, perhaps, because of any superior knowledge of violin playing but because folk are far more demonstrative nowadays than they were. Then one or two of the critics, Vernon Blackburn and J. F. Runciman, for example, were the image-breakers, even if their voices were of those crying in the wilderness. But the public were almost sheep-like in their bland acceptance of music and its performance.

Ostensibly to-day the hero-worship of Fritz Kreisler is far more evident than in the years that are gone it was for Joachim or even for Sarasate or Ysaye. Who that took part in it can ever forget the enormously impressive reception that was accorded to Kreisler on the occasion of his first appearance in London in 1921, his first appearance since the war? The uproar was great when he descended from his motor-car in Langham Place and entered the Queen's Hall. But that was as nothing to the scene which occurred when Kreisler issued from the Artists' Room and appeared on the platform. I can see him now, standing, as is his wont, with his violin hanging from his left hand down his side while he bowed and bowed again his acknowledgments of the hurricane of applause that was hurled at him. He has told me himself that that was the most tense moment of his career, for was he not a foreigner, an alien enemy who had actually fought with our foes in the Great War? Moreover, he had suffered in America after America entered the war and there was, or seemed to him, no particular reason why an English audience should treat him as other than an alien enemy. He had visions of eggs. Instead he received caresses. For nearly a quarter of an hour Kreisler stood while the roars of welcome poured over him. It was a scene quite indescribable in the tenseness of the emotion.

Can any who are able to recall half a century or so of music in London point to a similar episode in the career of any one of the artists we call great? Certainly I never saw a similar demonstration in the case of Joachim, or Sarasate—a popular idol, likewise—or Ysaye. The sympathy was of the utmost spontaneity. It was unique in my experience.

Why all this?

To my thinking the cause or the reason was primarily that Kreisler had for so many years proved himself to be of like manner with his hearers. He

was "one of us." In him was none of the prima donna. He could have stood for a statue of simplicity. And moreover, he had so often proved himself to be the possessor of an attractive personality, that most priceless gift of any public performer. Ask yourself of the failures who have come before a world hungry for a new success; ask why so many have been failures if in the beginning their way seemed to go in a direction entirely opposed to the original direction. I will warrant that in a majority of cases you will find the cause to lie in an almost complete lack of personality.

Of course this great personality may not be apparent in the beginning. Even Kreisler was compelled to bide his time ere he was accepted everywhere. It is not true, as 'Grove's Dictionary' has it, that Kreisler made his first appearance here at a Richter concert in 1901. As a matter of history he had come previously to England to seek his fortune and of this visit he has told me a story. No agent at the time would "test" him in an important London concert. The name of Kreisler was unknown here then. When he returned in 1901 it had become a household word, or he would not have been introduced by Hans Richter.

But the unknown quantity tried his fortune in the provinces. For an engagement at a South Coast resort an agent tendered him—Fritz Kreisler forsooth!—the eleemosynary fee of five guineas for a recital for which Kreisler must provide his own accompanist. To him came a then equally unknown pianist-accompanist of quite outstanding ability. His name was Hamilton Harty and his fee was six guineas. A small profit indeed for the now truly great violinist.

As to the sobriquet of "money grubber" which I have heard ascribed to Kreisler, I would like to tell a story with which I was somewhat mixed up, though, as a matter of fact, Kreisler's business and the public have no common denominator. It happened a good many years ago that Fritz Kreisler said to me that it was his heart's desire to establish in this country, which had always accorded him so warm a welcome, a species of Kreisler prize. He handed me a cheque for a very substantial sum. This sum was to be invested and the income derived from it was to be awarded annually to the violinist pupil elected to be the most efficient player so adjudged by certain experts of wide experience and of general acceptance. Unhappily, as I think, the whole idea was wrecked because it seems that the pupils of the great music schools of London are, by a hard and fast rule, not permitted to enter into competition with one another while they are still *in statu pupillari*. This may be sound from the strictly academic standpoint. It surely is wrong from the point of view of the art of violin playing as exemplified by the budding Kreislers.

Kreisler is *sui generis* as violinist and as man. We know his special attributes as the former. He has recorded all that is best in his repertoire, so that all and sundry may hear his reading of the great classics upon his playing of which his reputation was built and stands firm to-day. It is not given to all to realize what Kreisler spells as man. Everyone who hears him can note the superb personality which informs all that he achieves with his fiddle and his bow—he once told me that he would prefer to be described as a fiddler rather than as a violinist, of whom there are so many. As a man he is a keen philosopher. As a musician (and violinist) he is *hors concours*.

STAY CLOSE TO ME

BY ETHEL MANNIN

STAY close to me. There is no peace outside
That world-we make together. No tenderness, no
ease,

No respite from the conflict and the grind
Of all the things that clutter up the mind;
Wherefore, stay close, Beloved, hide
Safe in my heart from all the tyrannies,
There is no quiet in the world outside.

ARTISTRY

BY PETER TRAILL

I HAD been away over a year and as I, once again, entered the swing doors of "The Dragon" public-house in Fleet Street, in order to see all the old crowd, I was surprised to find no one there except Tweedie, who looked very disconsolate and solitary.

Tweedie was a dapper little man who was always neatly dressed from his ruby tie-pin to his well-shod feet and every fair hair of his head and face was drilled into position by brush and iron. We had always told him that he leant tone to our assemblies, and perhaps he persevered so with his appearance because he was, unlike the remainder of us, an artist.

"Hullo, Tweedie," I greeted him, "where are the rest?" He gave me a limp hand.

"Glad you've appeared; been away, haven't you?"

"Just got back. Where are the others?" I reiterated.

"Order yourself a drink," he said. "The rest don't come here any more now; they go to 'The Ram' farther up. Old pot-belly here has married Mary and now there's no peace to the place. Publicans shouldn't marry their barmaids, they only spoil other people's enjoyment." I fetched myself a drink and sat down beside him.

"Why haven't you moved as well?" I asked him.

"Because I am sick to death of the old crowd. Too much gas and too little work."

"Oh, *tête montée*!"

"Not at all, though I have struck lucky lately."

"What with?"

Tweedie gave me a long and incredulous stare.

"Do you mean to say that you don't know?"

I shook my head.

He brightened up considerably at that and rising from the bench ordered another "round" on the strength of it.

"Well, that's too splendid for words! Fancy you knowing nothing about it!"

"Tell me," I urged him.

"Not much; I'm sick of talking about the thing; you are going to be a great change. I haven't enjoyed meeting anyone so much for a long time. Are you busy?"

"So, so."

"You must come up and dine with me soon; I've moved out of my digs. in Holborn; I'm in Holland Park now."

"The measure of success?"

"No, of marriage."

I congratulated him and he pressed me to dine with him the following night. When we left "The Dragon," I would have consented to anything.

On arriving at his house the next night I was received by Tweedie's wife. She was a blonde woman with a nice figure, but her blue eyes were very expressionless and her face inanimate. I was disappointed, though I hope I did not look as puzzled as I felt.

"It was a great surprise for me to find that Jim had married; a pleasant surprise," I lied.

"You know what Jim is," she said. "I was standing looking at some news pictures in Fleet Street and turning round suddenly I fell into his arms, and what do you think he said when I apologized?"

"Haven't the least idea."

"He said that I needn't and the last woman who had made the mistake had leant back and murmured, 'Oh! What a gorgeous death!' Of course, the rest followed."

"Of course," I assented a little weakly. It was at this point that Tweedie appeared and we went into

dinner. He seemed a little on edge and I caught him observing me covertly throughout most of the meal; nevertheless he did most of the talking, asking me where I had been and what I had been doing, until his wife left us over the port.

"You've been pumping me fairly effectively," I said to him when we were alone. "Now tell me something about yourself. How have you amassed this wealth?"

"Don't let's bother about that," he said. "How do you like my wife?"

"Very well. But what puzzles me is that her face is quite familiar to me, though I'm sure that we are strangers. I'm afraid I stared at her when I met her. And though I like your wife, mind you, the curious thing is that I have the impression that she differs from the woman whom I think I have seen in several ways."

"How does she differ?" He rapped out the question.

"I don't think that I can altogether explain. She's certainly different and that's all I can say." At that he changed the subject abruptly and we did not refer to his wife again before I left, with a pressing invitation to come again as often as I liked.

Two or three days later I deliberately went in search of Tweedie and found him in "The Dragon," where he seemed very pleased to see me.

"I've solved the mystery," I said to him.

"What mystery?"

"The one about your wife. She's like that girl on the poster which is plastered all over the place. You know the one I mean—'Go to Healthy Heeton.' That's the caption, and the girl's standing on the edge of a cliff, looking out to sea, with her hair and her skirt blowing in the wind. You must know the thing?"

"Of course I do," he replied a little wearily. "That was the start of my poster work. My wife was my model."

"Oh, you did the poster," I said a little flatly.

"Unfortunately, yes. The moment the thing appeared everyone in this place buttonholed me and asked me whether I had had a model. When I told them that I had, they all wanted to meet her, and I like a fool told them all to go to hell."

"What on earth did you do that for?"

"I was afraid that one or other of them would take her away from me. You see, the poster was a great success and I didn't want to lose her. Everyone was so enthusiastic that I thought I'd struck a jewel of a girl. When I had married her myself, I invited them all along."

"Well?"

"They came all right, and they went. They told me that I might not realize it, but the fact was that the girl on the poster wasn't my wife at all."

"I don't think so either."

"Oh, don't you!" Tweedie exclaimed savagely. "The trouble with you so-called literary coves is that you must be superior."

"Sorry," I apologized.

"Of course, you are perfectly right," he said gloomily, "she isn't. I gave her vivacity, regularity of feature and poise. Everything, in fact, that the tired business man wants. That's why the poster was such a howling success. I fell in love with it myself."

"I see, rather awkward, isn't it?"

"It's much more than awkward, because my wife is quite unable to understand that she is not the girl on it. She expects everyone to fall down and worship her. She thinks the world should go, not to Healthy Heeton, but to Holland Park; and when people don't go, she says to me: 'That's what you've done for me, you've cheapened me. I ought to have sat for John, there's some distinction in that!'" He put down the remains of his whisky and soda at a gulp. "My life is a perfect torment," he finished.

"I'm sorry," I said.

"You're not half so sorry as I am," he replied. "When you told me you had been away for a long time, I hoped that you wouldn't have seen the poster; I might have known that you were bound to run up against the wretched thing somewhere. Still, if you hadn't, you might have taken my wife off my hands, provided I gave you the opportunity, and you were going to get that all right."

"I'm sorry that I did not come up to scratch," I said stiffly.

"Now I've only got one last resource," he went on. "I'm going to take her down to Healthy Heeton for a bit. People who will go to such a dreadful spot as that ought to fall for anything. I hope that they will fall for her, and if there is a God, then someone will be prompted to say, 'You are fifty times more good-looking than that disgusting poster which I saw at the station.' Those are the magic words which will awaken the sleeping beauty, and she will look into the eyes of the fool who has said them and will know that he understands her. Then perhaps the pair will go off to Sunny Southsea, or Casual Clacton, or Mouldy Margate, or Revolting Ramsgate, and be happy ever afterwards; but what is more important is that I shall be able to meet my friends again on level terms."

"It's an idea," I encouraged him.

"It is, but I'm always tormented by the thought that there can't be such another benighted idiot in the country as myself."

"You don't know this country."

"I hope not, but because they don't buy your books it doesn't follow that they are idiots," he replied gloomily.

After I had parted from him I walked down the Strand and instinctively stopped opposite the hoarding which displayed one of those popular posters. I must have been gazing at it very intently, because I was unaware of any companion until I heard myself addressed.

"Looks a bit of all right," a man's voice said.

"Ever been to Heeton?"

"It's a marvellous place," I replied on the spur of the moment.

"Think, maybe, I'll go down and have a look at it."

"You should," I answered, and then I looked at him. He was just the sort of man who might relieve Tweedie of his burden, and after all the white man's burden and the relieving of it is one of the greatest problems of this age or any other.

AFTER READING A BOOK OF TRAVEL . . .

By G. I. SCOTT MONCRIEFF

THIRTY foot of perfect-patterned metal,

Sin, hamadryad, beauty coiled to kill.

The adder underneath the primrose petal

Has seemed to me a subtler sinner still.

Fly, Argus pheasant with bejewelled wings

Where flowers are brighter coloured than the dawn,

I shall not see you while a lark yet sings

Above the lint-white of a field of corn.

Those other rivers, darkly animate,

Though there be rainbows where the water swirls,

I know a mountain burn that, when in spate,

Will turn its host of reeds to ropes of pearls.

Reflecting cloudless skies lie tropic seas,

Where, in a tinted world, the amethyst is king:

But still, while grey waves break upon the Hebrides

So shall they bound my utmost journeying.

THE FILMS

A DISAPPOINTING WEEK

By MARK FORREST

The Dancers. Directed by Chandler Sprague. The Alhambra.

Resurrection. Directed by Edwin Carewe. Trade Show.

THE principal picture at the Alhambra this week is a film version of 'The Dancers,' a play which made a considerable success in London just after the war. When I saw the piece then, the writing seemed to me to be crude, and such dialogue as the director has retained for the purposes of the screen is not very illuminating. Nevertheless, Mr. Sprague has done his job well, and the direction is nicely balanced. The story is a highly sentimental one, and the only thing in the entertainment which really calls for any enthusiasm is the appearance of Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Her voice is just as lovely as ever, which makes it all the more unfortunate that, on the few occasions when she is allowed to open her mouth, some other player is made to interrupt her. Her part is a very small one, but it is to be hoped that now Mrs. Campbell has been lured to Hollywood, Hollywood will find something more interesting for her to discuss than the difficulty of understanding what the Americans mean by comparing life to a bowl of cherries. To hear Mrs. Campbell pronounce the word "Cherries" will have to suffice her countless admirers for the present; it is not very much, but it is something, and more, so far as I am aware, than our own studios have so far allowed her to say.

Apart from her appearance, the most interesting event of last week should have been the Universal Company's new picture of Tolstoy's 'Resurrection.' The Universal Company was responsible for 'All Quiet on the Western Front,' for which a body known as The Faculty of Arts presented them with their first gold medal, an award to be made annually for meritorious pictures. When the Faculty have had an opportunity of seeing 'Resurrection,' they should consider taking the gold medal back again.

Tolstoy's book has for its theme the possibility of moral resurrection. There are two people with whom he is particularly concerned; the one, Prince Nekhludof, and the other, Katusha Maslova, a woman of the people. The Prince sees in his seduction of her the cause of all her subsequent moral degeneration, and, a chance presenting itself to him, tries to rebuild her soul, in the process of which he finds his own. The real drama of the story lies in the gradual breaking down of the Maslova's resistance to her own regeneration. There is in the book, besides Tolstoy the novelist, Tolstoy the social reformer and Tolstoy the apostle; one did not expect the film director to take much cognizance of the two last-named aspects, but one would have thought that the magnificent opportunities provided by Tolstoy, the novelist, would not have been missed. Not only have they been missed, but they have been ignored; for the director and the scenario writer have chosen to omit the hospital scenes altogether, while Simonsen does not figure in the cast at all! With this treatment they have succeeded in producing a picture so far removed from the nobility and idealism of the original that the book might well have been a penny novelette.

Not only has the book been maltreated, but pictorially the film is just as poor, the backgrounds in many cases being as artificial as the treatment. Lupu Velez, who is bodily the antithesis of the Maslova, does not approach the core of the character, and the casting of John Boles for the Prince is inexplicable.

THE THEATRE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

By GILBERT WAKEFIELD

The Duck Pond. By Bowen Burrows. Players Theatre.
Bed Rock. By Eden Phillpotts, H. F. Maltby and
Macdonald Hastings. Apollo Theatre.

WALKING homeward from the tiny Players Theatre, I fell to wondering what it could possibly have been that had prevented me from leaving after the first act. It hadn't been an optimistic notion that the play might improve as the evening went on; for 'The Duck Pond' had already revealed itself only too clearly as the "psychological play" it professed to be; i.e., a series of amorphous, inchoate, and largely incoherent, after-dinner conversations about Life, with occasionally a more frivolous passage of epigrammatical cynicism and some almost brazenly platonic love-scenes. After the amateurish first act I had left the theatre with every intention of not returning; and yet there I was back in my seat when the curtain rose on Act II. It was very odd.

Half-way home (for the second time that evening) I found the only explanation possible. Curiosity! From the very beginning of this utterly pointless play, the characters had been discussing what they apparently regarded as an epoch-making novel which their host, John Mannington, had written. It was called 'The Duck Pond,' and was evidently as psychological as Mr. Burrows's play. Miss West regarded it as "dangerous," and the author's wife was very much distressed by reading it. Boyd and Dr. Manchel professed themselves enthusiastic—though this didn't prevent them making ardent, but respectful, love to Mrs. Mannington, whenever her husband's back was turned; and only Miss Lovett, who was always cynical, admitted having done no more than cast an unappreciative glance at it.

But what on earth was this stupendously important book about? That was what I wanted to find out; and as everybody in the play had read it (so they said!), and had therefore no occasion to inform the others, we in the audience were forced to try to learn the secret indirectly. At the end of the second act, I was still completely in the dark, and had begun to suspect that the novelist's friends were more polite than honest, and that none of them had really read a word of it. True, this second act had culminated in a thunderstorm which I haven't a doubt was meant to be symbolical of something; and it had certainly been more symbolical than realistic; but all that I personally had learnt from the magnesium flashes and tea-tray noises "off," was that the resources of the Players Theatre are unequal to providing this particular "effect." And so I had to stay and see the third act, which consisted of breakfast-table conversation, the departure of the guests, and a final scene in which the author's wife assured her husband that she now completely understood his 'Duck Pond,' and his rather patronizing answer that he knew she would eventually!

None of the small cast had any opportunity of acting; but although at times they seemed acutely conscious of the play's absurdity, on the whole they managed to keep a fairly straight face while discussing that mysterious and revolutionary novel, which everyone invariably referred to (with, I felt, significant evasiveness) as "John's book."

'Bed Rock' is a so-called comedy about nine characters (for one cannot call them "people") who believe themselves shipwrecked on a desert island near Japan. And let me say at once that it is, without exception, the most idiotic play I've

ever had the joy of seeing. Much of it is merely dull; and the comedy and conscious humour (most of it provided by a stage-professor and an equally hackneyed broken-English foreign lady) will seem familiar stuff to anyone who patronized the less sophisticated farces of the early twentieth century. But the side-splitting drama and heroics of the second act were something new in my experience; and my gratitude for quite the best laugh I have had in any theatre for years is entirely unaffected by the fact that laughter was possibly not what the authors had intended to provoke.

But consider the terrific climax of this scene! The lovely Ann, dazzled by the intellectual brilliance of the otherwise conspicuously unattractive Ernest, had promised, before the ship was wrecked, to be his wife. Safe on the desert island, she had been inconsolable, thinking her Ernest drowned. Five minutes later she began to sit up and take amatory nourishment from the gallant Lewis; and within an hour or two (or was it even sooner, in the first act?) she and Lewis were engaged. At this point, Ernest swam ashore.

Now Ernest was regarded as a sort of life-belt; for his fame as a wireless expert, with a portable broadcasting machine, was known to his fellow desert-islanders. And so his box of modern magic was brought ashore from the ship (which declined, apparently, to sink), and Ernest was implored to send out S.O.S. calls to Japan. But Ernest had learnt of Ann's fickleness; for she had welcomed his arrival on the island with a tepidness that surprised this man she had been so ardently in love with two or three hours earlier. (It surprised even me.) And so they had to tell him the whole truth: that Ann had jilted him in favour of the more romantic Lewis.

And now for the Great Scene. "No!" cried Ernest; "if I cannot marry Ann, I do not wish to be saved! I refuse to send out S.O.S. calls, and we shall all starve to death here . . . unless Ann gives up this Lewis person and consents to marry me!" The retort to this was an attempt at bluff. Ann was persuaded to consent, with every intention of breaking her forced (and therefore morally invalid) promise, so soon as the trick had succeeded. But Ernest was not to be fooled like that; he insisted on marriage first and S.O.S. calls afterwards; and when it was pointed out to him that legal marriages are unobtainable on desert islands, he played a trump card with his villainous, but in the circumstances extremely cogent, argument, that as "possession is nine-tenths of the law," he could, and would, have, at any rate, nine-tenths of a legal marriage! I should add that he promised to marry the girl at the very first opportunity; which showed that he was morally sound, but slightly optimistic.

At this point, the excitement on the stage, the snoring of a neighbour in the stalls (he was missing a lot of fun, poor fellow!), and the infectious hilarity of those around me, caused me to be momentarily fuddled; and the next thing I heard was the demoniacal Ernest proclaiming that his mysterious box contained, not a broadcasting apparatus, but (of all things!) a portable hammock! And there, I assure you, was a curtain-climax which surpassed the wildest fancies of even Mr. Groucho Marx.

How much the incomparable absurdity of 'Bed Rock' owed to the badness of Mr. B. N. Lewin's acting in the role of Ernest is a question difficult to answer. All I know is that, whenever he was off the stage, 'Bed Rock' never sank below the level of dull silliness to that glorious riot of fantastic nonsense which characterized it every moment he was present. Whether this was what the authors of the play intended, I confess myself uncertain. All I am sure of is that 'Bed Rock' is, in fact, supremely silly and at times superlatively funny.



MR. W. R. M. LAMB
(Secretary of the Royal Academy of Arts)

THE "SATURDAY" COMPETITIONS NEW SERIES—XIX

THE SATURDAY REVIEW offers two prizes, of Fifteen Guineas and Ten Guineas, for the best two Essays on the proper function of Art in Modern Life and the Modern State.

The term Art for the purpose of this essay may be taken to cover every branch of Æsthetics—architecture, painting, sculpture, music, poetry, drama, opera, etc. The term Modern State may be taken to cover the whole relation of the individual and/or Society to those cultural interests. If, therefore, competitors think that the State should subsidize one or all of the Arts, they should be careful to say so; if, on the other hand, they should hold that, in the interests of morality or other national advantage, one Art should be suppressed and another encouraged, they should particularize which, if any, Art is in their opinion dangerous or pernicious, and which, if any, may properly be tolerated or encouraged.

Essays submitted should not be more than 2,000 words in length. Competitors are advised to adopt a pseudonym, and to enclose their name and address in a sealed envelope. Essays must be accompanied by a coupon, which will be found in this or any subsequent issue.

THE SATURDAY REVIEW can accept no responsibility for MSS. lost or delayed in the post.

The closing date for this Competition will be Monday, April 27, and it is hoped to publish the results early in June.

RESULT OF COMPETITION VIIA JUDGE'S REPORT

Entries in this competition for an essay on anything or nothing were only a quarter as numerous as those in our competition for a short story. Adjudication was, however, harder. No single essay could be rejected at first reading as altogether bad. The very worst did not sink below the level of cultured mediocrity. On the other hand, much of the work submitted was of a standard to command no more than a nod of approval.

Few competitors troubled to go beyond 2,000 words in length, or to do more than skim over the subjects of their choice. As a consequence, I do not recommend any of the graver essays to the editor's attention. No attempts were made to emulate Locke on Human Understanding or to produce anything comparable with Macaulay's Bacon. But it is evident that Mr. Chesterton has a number of more or less worthy disciples and that Lamb has many admirers who follow in the wake of Mr. Lucas.

The prizes should, I hold, be awarded as follows:

1. 'The One-Eyed Calendar,' by Sapristi. Since I found nowhere any mighty depth of wisdom, I should like first prize to be given for the essay in which I found the most wit and the best polished style.

2. 'On Exuberance,' by Maritana. Apart from one or two naïveties, this is a brilliant piece of work. It is both shapely and interesting, and the writer's power of making phrases, coupled with her talent for putting them in the right places, is remarkable.

3. 'On Writing an Essay,' by Jekyllhyde, is the most agreeable of the essays deliberately written about nothing. As the author has expressly stated that no essay ever ends, I suppose I must not complain that, after a graceful introduction and continuation, he has ended rather awkwardly.

Of the rest, I admired most 'Cages of Agony,' by Youth. After reading many artificial compositions, I was heartened by its blazing sincerity. Begum needed more space than she allowed herself for 'The Technique of the Eighteenth Century.' E. W. Adams,

who submitted no fewer than six essays, deserves mention for more than his industry. There is no denying his talent for "polite literature," yet the politeness was rather marred by a pedagogic touch. Noel Archer's appreciation of Thomas Hardy was sound and pleasant, but it gave me the feeling which psychoanalysts describe as *déjà vu*.

FIRST PRIZE

THE ONE-EYED CALENDAR

What is wrong with the world is that so often facts are accepted as truths. Birth certificates, for instance, are worse liars than expert witnesses. Their plausibility and their emergence from a public office bamboozle us into foolish surrender to the dominance of a mere date. Recent authorities assure us that it was a date and not an apple that led to our first parents' expulsion from Paradise. Many of us to-day allow a date either to drive us or keep us out of some Paradise we might have retained or captured. At the bidding of a mere scrap of paper we suffer our birthright to rank as a liability when it is still an asset. We fall an easy prey to that arch-trickster arithmetic. Every age is a golden age if we but know it and possess the secret of the transmutation of mettle, which interpreted means the adjustment of vital energy to changing circumstances. That, surely, is the charter both of long days and broad days. To most of us, however, new moons and birthdays, seed-times and harvests are a recurrent irritation; they are not so much anniversaries as adversaries, enemies of our peace, provokers of tumult of mind. We are either too old or too young. Youth and age are owners of adjoining estates, and each stares enviously across a disputed boundary and covets the choicest part of his neighbour's domain.

In the fascinating company of Haroun-al-Raschid we encounter in the narrow alleys of rich, dim old Baghdad a one-eyed calendar. The almanack frequently seems to be a one-eyed calendar—a calendar that squints at life. When we feel entirely grown up and fully assured of knowledge and wisdom superior to the dull platitudes of our elders, this grudging yet infallible pedant tells us we are only eighteen. When on a brisk September morning we fare forth, light of heart and heel, with gun and dog, through a warmly tinted countryside, to pepper the fugitive partridge, and bubble and babble with joy of life, this astigmatic recorder informs us that we are sixty-two.

A horrid, calculating creature, this one-eyed calendar. A black curse on his melancholy visage. A murrain on his plaguey accuracy. A mean, methodical, unadventurous accountant, he makes no gracious additions and no generous deductions. He is always detestably and vexatiously correct. His audit is minute, complete and technically unchallengeable. But the sorry fellow lacks vision and imagination. Figures, though they satisfy the statistician and may even please the tailor and modiste, only disclose half the real truth. The other half is more or less, the doctor's—sometimes the beauty doctor's—secret, or, at least, so the doctor thinks. The rotund man does not always live in a vicious circle, nor the lean man invariably have hard lines. I have squared by own circle and the family circle by wearing a belt which, advertised as abdominal is really abominable. A pert minx of a niece of mine who worships stars—at least, I find their photographs littered about her bedroom—calls it—shameless hussy—Orion, or the Great Belt, and giggles incontinently over the conjunction of the Bear—that is me, if you please—and Orion as signifying internal disturbances. But enough of that impudent jade, who, since an indulgent Government conferred the vote on her, gets quite beyond herself.

Let me resume my reasoned argument, though I am aware I am at the moment arguing in a circle. Defective circulation—an impoverishing ailment—may—at least in magazines—be cured by circularization. Praise be to Allah, I am no bigoted mathematician. I am all for round figures and fat dividends. I love Juno more than Jonah, and prefer Falstaff to Hamlet. I have more human kinship with G. K. Chesterton, with his honest ale and beef, than with Bernard Shaw, who, following a fashion set by Nebuchadnezzar when he was not quite at his brightest and best, eats grass like the ox and puts all wisdom in a nutshell. I should hate to be called a spare man; it sounds as though I were an understudy, and not good enough, emergencies excepted, to play in the side.

But these birthdays and anniversaries! We want them often and swift when we are callow. We desire them seldom and reluctant when, having climbed the high, sunlit ridges, we begin to drop to the shadowed valley beyond. Alas! they are often tragedies of vanishing opportunities and retreating romance, mill-stones round our necks as well as milestones on a weary journey. A birthday when, eager to work and needing a job, one is out of a berth, is a derisive festival, a mockery of merriment. And a birthday on which there are too many births is also lugubrious and discomfiting to the sober citizen, for the vulgar people next door love to sharpen their dull wits on words like "twins" and "triplets," and have no pity to waste on the over-burdened wretch whose quiver is already bursting with surplus arrows and his olive yard cumbered with needless branches. Other people's birthdays invariably arrive when one can ill afford a gift to lay on the altar of affection. It is a dubious delight to say to our friends "Many happy returns" when we are ourselves engaged in making most unhappy returns on Income Tax forms or receiving disconcertingly small or no returns from our investments.

Doubly dear, therefore, to a harassed household, because twice as cheap, is that luckless child born, if not always in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen, at least under a niggardly star, and thrust—poor bairn—without being consulted, into this troubled world on a Christmas Day. Noel is of sheer necessity—I speak literally—my favourite grandson, and I pray devoutly my next granddaughter—for my title as chief of a crowded clan is constantly receiving wholly unasked-for and redundant confirmation—may prove a Nowella.

At sixty-two no generous philanthropist dreams of giving me solid—or liquid—tokens of congratulation on surviving for a further 365 days the perils that beset pedestrians. As every year is now for foot passengers, or, at least, might well be deemed, a leap year, I think I ought to say 366 days. No, not a single soul sends me a box of Coronas or a case of Veuve Chicquot when I stagger, spent and outworn, to the final moment of another twelve months of ill-rewarded labour. I am, therefore, on many grounds an urgent and convinced advocate of the abolition of birthdays. The scientist should direct his skill and knowledge to infecting us with a genial and selective loss of memory, and His Majesty's lieges should on application at the local Post Office be given, when they get their dog licences, ages corresponding to their looks and spirits, their capacities and feelings. Think, my fellow taxpayers, of the saving in women's pensions alone that such a policy would effect. To Gehenna, then, I say, with the one-eyed calendar.

And to Gehenna, also, with the dismal business of completing Schedule "D" to the satisfaction of His Majesty's Inspector of Taxes, to which task willy-nilly—mostly nilly—I must now return. I have never yet encountered in the flesh an Inspector of Taxes. I do not seek to do so. I am choleric. I am muscular. My punch has made strong heads dizzy before now. I am a man of my hands. I nurse a just grievance.

I therefore avoid physical contact with Income Tax officials. No doubt they have birthdays, and wives and babies—certainly baby Austins—of their own, and, domestically considered, are amiable and worthy citizens. I picture them on summer evenings, playing a brisk game of bowls. I imagine them in the winter evenings engaged in snappy rubbers of whist, or lively battles at draughts, or even, so strong is habit, in attempts at cards to beggar their neighbour. But, as I say, I have not yet come into bodily touch with any Inspector, Controller, Surveyor or Collector of Taxes, and, God forbid, for reasons already stated, that I ever shall. If, indeed, these gentlemen reach the destination to which I frequently consign them, my Vicar, who possesses a tolerant outlook, gives me to hope that I shall escape, even in the next world, the business of shaking hands with them, or would it not be shaking fists at them? However, once in a moment of kindly aberration I scribbled an epitaph for an Income Tax Collector who had—also in a moment, I suppose, of unwonted forgetfulness—subscribed himself as my obedient servant. It ran something like this:

His duty was to squeeze from folks their tax—
Schedules his screws and long-drawn forms his racks—
To probe men's secrets and detect the cheat,
No saintly office, but Saint Matthew's seat.

And I beg to announce that, as a Christmas or New Year or birthday present, I am prepared to bestow the right to inscribe that epitaph on his tombstone, on any Income Tax official who points out to me spontaneously that I have sent too much, and returns on the instant and without parley, the excess. I cannot say fairer than that, except that I hope that all the children of such a noble fellow may be born on the 29th of February; not all on one twenty-ninth, mark you, but one each on a series of twenty-ninths. That will give the poor devil that chance to recover his breath and his bank balance the gods have denied those distraught payers of tax like myself, over whose devoted head his tomahawk is for ever whirling and gleaming.

SAPRISTI

SANCTUARY

By H. F. SMALMAN-SMITH

TO hope, and hope again;
Face the long ordeal of the changing hours
Aglow with vision or stung dry with pain,
Reckless of toil, unstinting of your powers;
And when success, elusive, fails once more,
Work, as you worked before.

To wait, and wait again;
Not knowing if of waiting there'll be fruit,
Fighting the midnight doubt, torn by the strain
Of energies enchained and protest mute;
And when the sterile days slip hungry past,
Have patience at the last.

To dream, and dream again;
Climb at your will to realms where you may keep
The once-perceived ideal aloof from stain,
Singly in judgment; so from the days to reap
Freedom from fate and self, serene, alone,
Live, with a life your own.

CROSS WORD PUZZLE—XIV

"HIDDEN QUOTATION"

BY MOPO

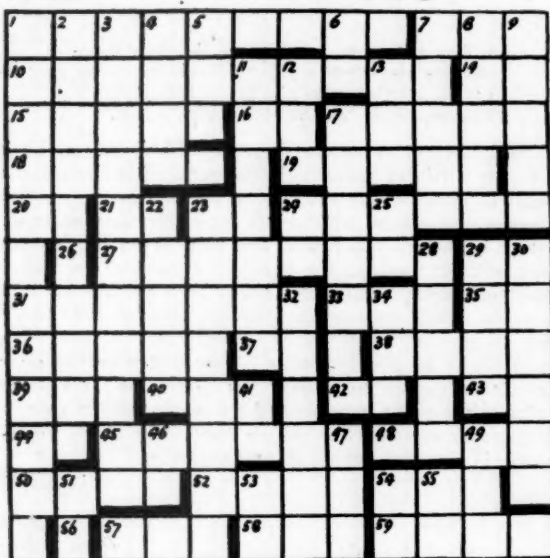
A weekly prize of any book reviewed or advertised in the current issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW, not exceeding half a guinea, will be given for the first correct solution opened. The name of the book selected must be enclosed with the solution; also the full name and correct postal address of the competitor.

Solutions must reach us not later than Thursday following the date of publication. Envelopes must be marked "Cross Word" and addressed to the Cross Word Editor, SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2.

The following numbers form a quotation from a modern poet, viz.:

56, 32, 52, 36, 56, 52, 1a, 28,
56, 52, 27, 8, 52, 41, 17d,
30, 46, 54d, 19, 50,
29d, 26, 57, 24a, 42, 54a.

The clues to some of these words are missing.



QUOTATION AND REFERENCE

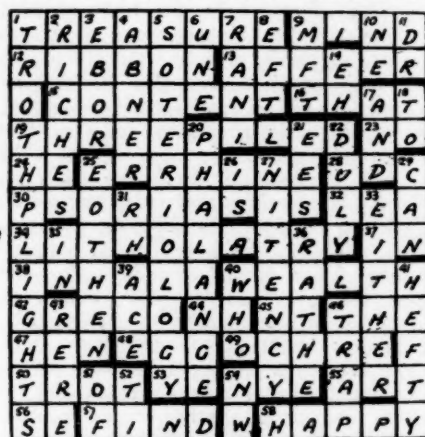
Across.

CLUES.

7. Simmers after 20 reversed.
10. "Bid me to live, and I will live thy — to be."
14. You can use me for a dwelling-place.
15. Laryngitis making a noise like swarms of bees in a box.
16. Elect me to the House of Commons and I'll get information by artful questions.
17. Drudge.
18. Sir Toby was sure care was this to life.
19. See 17d.
20. Nothing would make me subordinate to an officer.
21. Nothing less than a fragment.
23. I, too, am a dish made with cocoa-nut.
24. "But when the silver dove descends I find the little — of friends."
27. The knob on a deer's horn and the business end of a bee combine to produce an unpleasant effect on pipes in winter.
29. See 7a.
31. A kind of constable.
33. The undergraduates have set about this the wrong way, but no doubt there's a cause.
35. A little thing that can lift above thousand pounds a 24d a minute.
36. A "lance" that was always this might satisfy pacifists.
37. A form of card game before 42.
38. Love this for the Trojan twins.
- 39 rev. Anacreontic before 6 reversed.
40. Nothing more than 20.

42. See 37.
 43. Tree whose roots are eaten in time.
 44. You will find this a little from the sign.
 45. Rather rearrange to refile.
 48. "—, Francis? No, Francis; but to-morrow, Francis."
 52. "He throws his supplication to the rose."
 56. Nil.
 57. Lass from a root that has taken a turn to escape consumption.
 58. A buddle.
 59. River in Belgium.
- Down.
1. Penguins of the donkey sort.
 2. "A marcfil Providence fashioned us holler O' purpose that we might our — swaller."
 3. Wandering salt-water insect.
 4. This particular article can be evolved from an insect.
 5. Town in Norway famous for wisdom when alongside a hill.
 6. See 39 and 54d.
 7. Semitic peoples did this in their correspondence.
 8. It was this sort of Queen who offered to engage a lady's maid at 2d. a week and jam every other day.
 9. Pagett, M.P., acquired a practical knowledge of this kind of myth.
 11. Nuptial.
 12. This little shack has the roof at the bottom.
 13. Organizer of shooting competitions.
 17. "It's 19's —!" said the Captain, looking intently in her face.
 - "It's the sweet creetur grow'd a woman!"
 22. This rodent can put its food in its pocket.
 23. "Belike then my appetite was not — got; for, by my troth, I do now remember the poor creature, small beer."
 24. See 35.
 25. A negative reversed.
 30. "Take warning! he that will not sing while yon sun prospers in the blue, shall sing for want, ere leaves are new, caught in the frozen palms of—."
 34. Shakespeare wrote much this about its tail.
 47. This house plot was defeated by an accidental fire, and one consequence was the death of Algernon Sidney.
 49. A bill of sale that included this would provide instruments for gambling.
 51. Disappears when chased by 55.
 53. 43 reversed.
 54. An Indian bird with 6.
 55. See 51.

SOLUTION OF CROSS WORD PUZZLE No. XII



HIDDEN QUOTATION.

"Content is wealth, the riches of the mind,
And happy he who can that treasure find."
Dryden, 'The Wife of Bath Her Tale.'

NOTES

Across.

12. R. L. Stevenson, 'Rahero.'
19. 'Winter's Tale,' IV, 3.
24. Hent.
38. Inhalation.
42. i.e. Greco-Roman Art.
54. Bret Harte, 'That Heathen Chinese.'
56. Tose.

Down.

4. Bret Harte, 'Soc. upon the Stanislaus.'
29. Cantata.
33. 'The Beggar's Opera,' II, 13.
35. Foin.
36. Milton's 'Lycidas.'
39. Acetic.
43. Reremouse = bat.
54. North-west and South-east.

RESULT OF CROSS WORD PUZZLE No. XII

The winner is Miss D. M. E. Dymes, The Training College, Darlington, Co. Durham, who has selected for her prize, 'The Bronze Age,' by V. G. Childe. (C.U.P., 8s. 6d.)

No fewer than 18 competitors went wrong on clues number 59a and d. Apparently they failed to see that north-west is the reverse direction to south-east.

WHOM THE CAP FITS—II

IF brains and learning were alone necessary to success in life, there would be little beyond the scope of your attainments. But there are other requisites no less important, and although you are blessed with an unusually full quiver, I am afraid that unless you can count good fortune among your arrows, you will miss even an alternative goal. Trained for the Bar, you proved your worth and might well have achieved the highest position. Your industry and perspicacity were amazing. But you became enamoured of the fiend of politics who suggested a speedier road to Fame. Time will decide the wisdom of your choice. But have no delusions, the prize is to the unscrupulous: the honest go empty away.

A real Tory, endowed with great courage and perseverance, you entered the House of Commons when both were sadly needed. True to your creed you preached what too many of your persuasion had forgotten—that a Party without principle is merely a faction; that strength alone carries conviction and that a great Cause is won by Faith, never by Intrigue. Gifted with a retentive memory, rare powers of discernment and convincing speech, you were often the shield as also the spearhead of your Party in debate. Your manner, too, was attractive; your temper admirable. Add to this a countenance that cheered and Success stood attendance at your door. Incidentally you have doubtless seen a bust of Socrates? Truly the resemblance is not inapt. Clad in such political armour you were a match for any opponent and the worthy champion of a great Cause. And so it happened that very soon responsible ministers sought your help and advice, which in due season were rewarded with Office.

The road to Fame is most difficult at the outset: the crowd outstripped, however, the competitors are few. Being well to the fore, you are certain of a prize, though it will not be the first. I draw this conclusion from your refusal lately to be considered in connexion with a position highly prized. And yet I am credibly informed that allegiance, not reliance, was the deciding factor, for, in common with others, you realize that "all is not well with the State of Denmark." Whether or not you are capable of remedying the evil is beside the mark; the point at issue is far deeper. You appeared to have forgotten that Parties are concerned with the welfare of the State, not with the well-being of any individual. And so the matter could have been decided but for your generous advocacy, which turned the scale. In truth Liberty is accountable for many errors, though I am not sure that Loyalty is not answerable for many more. Still, rich in esteem you can afford the mistake, though if a similar crisis is to be avoided, you would do well to infuse your associates with a measure of the courage and determination that inspires your supporters.

I have catalogued but a few of the excellent qualities that have paved your public way. One I had forgotten—you are gifted with rare instinct, the signpost of Success. Follow it despite the curb of opposition or the rein of tactics. Small men live by their tricks, but leaders must possess vision. Do you know of such a one?

That the country is on the high road to ruin few will deny and none at heart disbelieve. In the circumstances, therefore, though others may fear to strike, follow your spirit; stand the hazard of the die: and interpret the feelings of your countrymen by execrating Socialism in any and every guise. You would do well at the outset to cleanse the stables of your own Party. Nothing great was ever yet achieved without sacrifice—there is no exception to the rule. But you at least will agree that success will be cheaply bought at the price of Office.

ACHATES

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

¶ The Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW welcomes the free expression in these columns of genuine opinion on matters of public interest, though he disclaims responsibility alike for the opinions themselves and the manner of their expression.

¶ Letters on topical subjects, intended for publication the same week, should reach him on Tuesday.

SUNDAY CINEMAS

SIR,—Compulsory Sunday closing of cinemas now open on Sundays may secure, on rather strictly interpreted religious grounds, the support of many truly charitably minded men and women.

If, however, it were pointed out to these supporters of Sunday closing that the hospitals, to which they are, without doubt, regular subscribers, stand to lose very seriously if the Sunday picture-houses have to close down, they might very well reconsider their attitude.

Approximately £200,000 is distributed each year among hospitals and other charities from Sunday performances of various kinds. By far the greatest part of this sum is contributed by the cinemas. If this money is stopped, who will make it up in such difficult times as we are now encountering?

I am, etc.,

F. P. CARROLL
(Secretary-Superintendent)The Golden Square Throat,
Nose and Ear Hospital, W.1

SIR,—Those of us who are connected with the cinema industry in London grow a little weary of the sly hints that there is a catch somewhere about the contribution made to charities by the cinemas from their Sunday takings. The whole procedure could not in fact be more rigidly straightforward. Each London cinema submits to the London County Council its audited accounts for these Sunday openings and the Council has laid down quite definitely the type of expenditure which it allows.

Nothing is included for depreciation, directors' fees, head office expenses, or mortgages. In the result there is an annual contribution to London charities of more than £180,000, a sum which represents twenty-two and a half per cent. of the gross takings. If, with these figures before him, any responsible business man still feels inclined to sneer at the cinemas' offering to the hospitals, I should advise him to do so anonymously. For it seems to me that the inference that any business undertaking, especially in these days, is making more than twenty-two and a half per cent. on turnover would be of special interest to its owner's income-tax assessor!

I am, etc.,

ARTHUR TAYLOR

Panton Street, S.W.1

'DEMOCRACY IN DANGER'

SIR,—Mr. W. J. Brown in his article makes some assumptions that are not likely to cut much ice with your readers. Mr. Brown is the sort of Socialist who wants industry to be run under the authority of Parliament, apparently by a body to which Parliament will delegate that duty. I thought that that type of Socialism had been discredited even among Socialists.

Let us by all means reform the Parliamentary machine, but the nation will never consent to have Parliament shut down while Sir Oswald Mosley, Mr. Brown, and three other gentlemen play monkey-tricks with industry. (By the way, I have often

heard Labour politicians complain that Parliament did not work long enough.) Mr. Brown had better try again when he knows more about the Constitution and its history than he shows in his article.

I am, etc.,

ROBERT E. DICK

SIR,—Mr. Brown, M.P., is pathetic. In your last issue he clamours for a dictatorship of five on the ground that under the present Cabinet system Parliament is unable to solve the unemployment problem.

Has he given one moment's thought to the question whether Parliament under any system can solve the unemployment problem? Is there any political remedy at all?

The only helpful steps that Parliament can take are to (1) stop all new schemes for fresh expenditure; (2) severely cut down the expenditure authorized by the Parliaments of the last twenty five years; and (3) let industry solve its own problems.

If we could put our law-making politicians into unemployment, there would soon be a rapid decrease of unemployment in industry. Five dictators would soon so upset the industrial apple-cart that unemployment would become universal.

I am, etc.,

CYRIL MARTIN

MENTAL ILLNESS

SIR,—It has often been stated that the Mental Treatment Act is an attempt to treat mental illness on the same basis as is the case with physical, but it is nevertheless proposed to place all cases under lunacy control. One might as well place all physical ills under one head and that one deemed "incurable." The whole idea of preventive treatment is to forestall disease. To treat that which is admittedly not lunacy in much the same way as if it were (i.e., by placing these early cases under lunacy control) is to court failure at the outset.

The major mistake in the treatment of mental sickness has been to hold that it is incurable. This attitude paralyses all curative effort at the start, which degenerates into mere detention. To be successful early mental cases should be sympathetically treated independently of that administration which deals exclusively with lunacy.

There is little hope for prevention so long as the old administration is brought into play. An entirely "new code," as recommended by the Royal Commission, is essential. The "old gang" have had their day and however good their intentions may have been, they have failed lamentably to improve the recovery rate of mental illness.

I am, etc.,

FRANCIS J. WHITE

60 Avenue Chambers, W.C.1

'A WOMAN'S UTOPIA'

SIR,—In thanking you for your stimulating criticism of my 'A Woman's Utopia,' I would like to point out that your reviewer has overlooked a whole chapter (VIII) which deals exclusively with the vote, to which the miner's bath and the woman M.P.'s uniform are made quite subservient. But when a parliamentary report, in one of the most important London papers, gives large type to "Lady Astor's Hat" and several lines to that hat's reception in the House, it is time for thoughtful women to protest. In my 'Woman's Utopia' I suggest that women should be garbed with dignity instead of with individuality, when more notice would be taken of what they say, and less comment made on how they look.

In conclusion: Is the "will to accomplish" a "materialistic creed?" Surely not, since the thing to be accomplished—Happiness—can never be materialistic.

I am, etc.,

A DAUGHTER OF EVE

[Criticizing criticism is even easier than criticizing Utopias. But when a book devotes six pages to baths and only four to votes, I think it must be admitted that water bulks unduly large in 'A Woman's Utopia.'

I cannot believe that the clothes of the woman M.P. make any great difference to the influence of her speeches in the House. If they do make such a difference, I should have thought that the wearing of original clothes would have been a stimulant to original thought and valuable to that extent.

With regard to the last paragraph, I would suggest that happiness is not an accomplishment but rather an accident, and that the type of mind which is sufficiently active to accomplish is not likely to be thoroughly happy.—THE REVIEWER.]

"TOMMY" SHORT AND THE D.N.B.

SIR,—It seems to me odd that the Rev. Thomas Short, who died in 1879, should have escaped notice in the 'Dictionary of National Biography.' He was an Oxford tutor at Trinity for an exceptionally long term of years; he was distinguished at Rugby as boy and master and Arnold beat him for the Headmastership by one vote only. He was, further, an Oxford "character," well known for his wit, whist and wine, keeping a pipe of port he had bought from a dissenting wine-merchant, labelled "Schismatic Binn." Tuckwell, my friend of earlier *Athenæum* days, has recorded his humour and his services to Newman.

Newman had failed in his final Schools, owing to underfeeding, and it was Short who found him depressed after the first day of the examination for the Oriel Fellowships, gave him a good lunch, and persuaded him to go on. Newman, when he revisited Oxford in old age, remembered the lunch and agreed that Short had influenced his career more than any man. After Short's death, he said a Mass for him yearly, a tribute his old tutor would hardly have appreciated.

Short came of a well-known Warwickshire family and had his pedigree drawn up when he was past eighty. The President of Trinity, who shares my surprise at the omission, kindly informs me that the college had a good sketch of Short—'Rhetoric Lecture, 1846'—by the father of the present Dean of Westminster. Raper of Trinity could have written a capital account of Short, but now, I fear, there is no resident at Oxford who remembers him.

I am, etc.,

V. R.

CATHOLICS AND BIRTH CONTROL

SIR,—There is one very important point arising out of the Pope's reference, in the *Casti Conubii* encyclical, to birth control. The crucial passage reads: "The Catholic Church, to whom God has entrusted the defence of the integrity and purity of morals, standing erect in the midst of the moral ruin which surrounds her, in order that she may preserve the chastity of the nuptial union from being defiled by this foul stain, raises her voice in token of the divine ambassadorship and through our mouth proclaims anew: Any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offence against the law of God and nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin."

My purpose here is not to discuss the truth or otherwise of the above declaration, but only to raise the question of its precise theological status. Ever since at the Vatican Council of 1870, Pope Pius IX made

7 February 1931

Papal Infallibility an article of faith, there have been disputes as to whether Papal utterances are or are not within the scope of that Infallibility. Two results have followed from that uncertainty. No one in the Roman Catholic Church ever now questions any Papal utterance; and yet, when any past utterance is shown to be wrong, it is attempted to be shown that it did not come within the "infallible" category. Thus (one may say) the cake is both eaten and had.

Is the above-quoted *Casti Conubii* utterance included in the "infallibility" category? The 1870 definition said that the Pope "possesses that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed"; and that he exercises it "when in discharge of the office of Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church."

Does the recent declaration of Pius XI come within these limits? He said, "The Catholic Church, to whom God has entrusted the defence of the integrity and purity of morals . . . raises her voice . . . and through our mouth proclaims"; then the declaration: contraception "is an offence," and those practising it "are branded with the guilt of a grave sin."

Thus, the Pope says he is voicing the Church's moral judgment; he, so doing, "proclaims" that such-and-such a thing is wrong.

Is this not clearly an infallible utterance according to 1870 conditions? It seems so; yet a theologian might say that the words do not define a doctrine, but condemn a practice. Look at it again, however: it positively says that such-and-such is the Church's moral teaching. It defines doctrine.

My conclusion is that the more one looks at it the more one admires the ingenuity of its author. It seems so clearly an infallible definition; yet there is just enough of the negative about it to leave a tiny loophole for saying, later on (if it were expedient to alter it), that it does not come within the 1870 category.

I am, etc.,

Highbury, N.5

J. W. POYNTER

'TOLSTOY: THE INCONSTANT GENIUS'

SIR,—Mr. Aylmer Maude's last letter seems to require further reply. All must have sympathized with him in the difficult task he at first essayed, of trying to prove a negative in respect of Tolstoy's amorous adventures. Now, being confronted with some plain evidences, he seeks to belittle them. This is the reverential attitude which I ventured to deprecate. Tolstoy, the aged oracle, must be served at any cost, it seems.

So 'tis admitted that Tolstoy as a lad at Yasnaya did beckon in "something pink," and satisfy himself therewith; but "where is the evidence that this was a peasant girl?" Perhaps it was a countess hanging about there by the back door. The young master would hardly have taken the village whore into his house. As to his tortured memory of his liaison with a peasant, she was not "a girl," says Mr. Aylmer Maude, but "a married peasant." Is this, then, to be counted for righteousness? He seduced a chambermaid (doubtless a peasant girl), and she perished—but this was in Kazan, so perhaps this does not count. Tolstoy did take a gipsy girl on his knee for naughty talk, and what not—but only one, only a little one. What he really went to the gipsies for was "to hear them sing." But the real Tolstoy of those riotous "twenty years of coarse dissipation" writes:

I cannot overcome my sensuality, and the less so in that it is a passion which has now become in me a habit.

And to Yasnaya in the spring of 1849 comes brother Serge with his gipsy, and a horde of her comrades, and camp there. No Queen's Hall

atmosphere about them, though there is music and singing enough. They indulge in wild debauches—they live in drunkenness together, this chaste company, with their "strict code." Does Mr. Aylmer Maude want Tolstoy to be caught in *flagrante delicto* before he will believe his own words?

It seems to me that every bare leg of a woman belongs to a beauty. . . . Carnal desire does not give me a moment of respite. . . . I have sinned again.

And all this was of value as material, giving insight and experience, provided the artist was in the bear's skin, as it proved. But after fifty years came the staleness of satiety, and "the devil a monk would be." As Count Serge put it: "Our dear Léon has licked the caviare off the sandwich, and he now offers us the dry crust."

If he had not turned and rent his art, Tolstoy's religious writings might be regarded with less impatience by those to whom they do not appeal. I was awaiting Mr. Aylmer Maude's citation from Mr. Bernard Shaw on 'What is Art?' This book put Mr. Bernard Shaw in a quandary, as by its canons all his own works would be ruled out of court. But as usual, our Prince of Publicity made the best of both worlds. He first set up a man of straw, some "routine critic," "a dilettantist reviewer"—one of those silly asses who cannot be expected to understand things of deep import—and be-thwacked him instead of Tolstoy. Then, with due gravity, Mr. Bernard Shaw picked out Tolstoy's basic platitude as a sign of his subtle wisdom, ignoring the house of cards built upon it.

As to Prince Mirsky, I set against him the late Sir Edmund Gosse:

A gradual change came over him, a disturbance of his relation towards every aspect of human life. His pride towered to an intolerable height; he scorned common sense, and common experience. . . . He ceased to be of service to art or mankind. . . . Intellectually, spiritually, during the close of his life Tolstoy was a hippopotamus rolling about in a clouded pool. The spectacle would be sad, but not tragical, had he not been taken by a crowd of disciples as a saint and a prophet and a master.

It is evidently of no use to argue further about Tolstoy's masquerade as a peasant. It was Countess Alexandra, his cousin, who exclaimed that his clothes were a "masquerade." It was his wife who complained that he did "senseless physical work which, even in peasant households, only young folk do." But Mr. Aylmer will not have it.

I am, etc.,

A. P. NICHOLSON

SIR,—Mr. Aylmer Maude is privileged to write at length on his favourite apostle. But Englishmen are not to be intimidated by the verdicts of Shaw and Mirsky. They have ample reason to doubt the authority of Tolstoy, in view of his remarks on the greatest of English writers. 'Tolstoy on Shakespeare' was published by the Free Age Press some years since, and for sixpence I learnt from the master that only hypnotic suggestion prevents the world from seeing that 'King Lear' "is a very bad, carelessly composed production, which, if it could have been of interest to a certain public at a certain time, cannot evoke among us anything but aversion and weariness."

A humourless and foolish description of the play follows and the old drama of 'King Lear' is preferred as "incomparably and in every respect superior to Shakespeare's adaptation." Why? The old drama terminates "more naturally and more in accordance with the moral demands of the spectator than does Shakespeare's."

I have italicized two words. Here is the motive which induced Tolstoy to suppose that the Press and

public opinion have jointly produced an insane worship of Shakespeare which has led our drama to "empty and immoral amusement."

If this be true gospel, not only England but Europe has been grossly deceived. But wise Englishmen decline to accept the views of any foreigner on their greatest writer. If they do trouble to read Tolstoy on Shakespeare, they will pay only a mild tribute of wonder to the pathetic impudence of a narrow fanatic who ventures to instruct them that their birthright of understanding is all humbug. If they know Shakespeare well, they will perceive that Tolstoy exposes his own incompetence to deal with the subject. But that is nothing: a dominating theory is like a drug: it submerges good sense.

I am, etc.,

Royal Societies Club

PENNIALINUS

DR. CLOUDESLEY BRERETON'S AGRICULTURAL PAMPHLET

SIR,—It is imperative that the price of grain be raised to the farmer. He is fast losing his capital—many have lost all—and not only the farmer but the country also is bidding for ruin if it lets its food production rest in the hands of the foreigner. The time might quickly come when we should be starved or bled white.

Have our legislators no vision? "Where there is no vision the people perish." The backbone of the nation is in the farms and country cottages (not in the mines or factories, important as they are), and our rulers appear blind or oblivious to the fact, acting as if the nation could exist on party votes.

Let politicians stand aside and put the country in the charge of Statesmen who will consider equally the needs of all classes; we shall then stand on a solid foundation instead of the present instability and uncertainty. We need a sound policy and to stick to it, and to get rid of party politics as a controlling factor.

Times have been and may come again when the farmer and farm workers are found to be the nation's life blood and lungs; some of our £400 a year M.P.s evidently think them of no account, and that party votes are the first consideration.

They have let distributors and middlemen obtain a stranglehold of the producer and consumer. Market rings have become a terrible parasite on agriculture, they are against all but themselves and a curse to the country, producing nothing and robbing the producer of his just earnings, whether by cattle or corn, and the farmer cannot help himself; he has but one market for corn and has to take the lowest price millers and merchants decide to offer. The buyers, on the other hand, have the option of overseas supply should they need it.

The men of the market rings are the "get rich quick" variety of no good to anybody. Service rather than self-interest should be the aim, and we have many ready to serve their country first and foremost and only such should have a seat in our legislature. Let the demagogue expel his gas in Hyde Park. In Westminster there should be only long views for the welfare of the peoples of the Empire—men who will lift agriculture and industry to its rightful position as the life blood of the worker; then there might be a happy and contented people co-operating for the common weal, and five days a week of such help as they would give would bring abundant prosperity to this land of ours, with a day for pleasure and, still more important, for a Sabbath for rest, without which our land will never prosper. The Fourth Commandment is the first and most important of all that are not (as the first three) personal to our God. If the Sabbath goes England goes.

We cannot expect our harvests to be successful as promised in Deut. xxviii, if we disregard God's laws, but we need our fields to yield plentifully and

apart from protection, subsidy or bounty, and our Government should be able to ensure this by arranging that a fair price should be paid for all home-grown corn. It would pay the nation over and over again to have this done; the money would come from the inexhaustible soil, which should be intelligently cultivated to produce its maximum, finding the most healthy and enjoyable employment for the greatest number. Let the nation take to heart the immortal lines of Goldsmith:

Ill fares the land to hast'ning ills a prey
When wealth accumulates and men decay,
Princes and lords may flourish and may fade,
A breath can make them as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied.

The one thing that should be done is to give a price for wheat that would make wheat growing remunerative. Our Government have figures to show that the farmer could be in receipt of 50s. to 55s. per quarter for his wheat, and at the same time, given efficient milling and baking, the 4-lb. loaf could be sold retail for 6½d.

Get our fields annually producing the wealth they are capable of doing and our towns and cities will be prospering, our countryside happy and our nation confident.

With the above I am persuaded that we should have an abundant store of grain in the country; a year's supply would not be too much. Our bread would be more digestible and sustaining, prices would be stable and the confidence and security it would bring to our towns and cities in times of scarcity or war would be inestimable.

How much better to bring prosperity by finding employment, than the present system of dole with all its degradation, causing inefficiency and indolence, C₃ instead of A₁ men, men without pride in either their person or their country.

Food is the first need of the population, and should have our legislators' first and earnest attention. Other needs will follow in train, as the agricultural wealth produced gravitates to the towns. Our standard of living will go up, the health of the nation will improve and our country again be a land fit for heroes to live in.

I am, etc.,

Frinton-on-Sea,
Essex

J. W. Moss

FASCIST METHODS

SIR,—The industry of Signor Villari is so tremendous in defence of Fascist methods in Italy that he appears to have forced most of his readers into a condition where an "inferiority complex" is the dominant factor—and so, in the phraseology of the present time, the Signor "gets away with it."

According to Signor Villari, Italian legal methods are all that they should be; everything is explained and justified. But every potentate throughout history (even the most bloodthirsty tyrants), every dictator, every executive politician past and present (even in Great Britain) has an explanation—and very naturally so—for his deeds and misdeeds and his lines of policy, whether autocratic or so-called "democratic." The remarkable thing is that people accept such explanations as if they were really valid and equivalent to a justification; except, of course, where by propaganda, a distinct bias against, and dislike of, a nation has been fostered—as for instance in the case of Germany during the war and of Soviet Russia since the war. If the Soviet had been allowed to have in this country as able a defender as Signor Villari is of Fascism—let us say Trotsky writing from the Devonshire Club—it is quite probable that the animus against the Soviet would be much less,

and perhaps Europe would have been all the better for it.

In regard to the British Appeal concerning the trial of anti-Fascists in Italy, it seems to me that Signor Villari, in dragging in the Soviet, has failed to be as clever as usual. I have followed Labour and Socialist politics fairly carefully during the past decade and therefore I am able to say that the signatories of the "Appeal" under discussion do not include "persons of notorious Bolshevik sympathies"—three of them might perhaps be faintly described as such, while the only trade-union official mentioned is decidedly anti-Bolshevik. The Signor goes on to state that these signatories never said a word "in favour of the victims of Soviet persecution and of wholesale executions without trial"! What are these poor devils of Russians to do? If the Soviet shoots without trial (they are not afraid of saying so—I have seen and read paragraphs in the Russian papers myself) they are blamed; if they do have a trial lasting ten days—as in the case of the recent "Industrial Party" conspirators—they are likewise blamed and the trial is declared a farce! One factor Signor Villari overlooks—I set out the facts some years ago in the SATURDAY REVIEW—is that Soviet Russia in 1918-20 was attacked by a horde of foreign troops (in association with the Russian "Whites") that included, according to M. Pichon (French Foreign Minister) no fewer than 2,000 Italian troops on the Siberian front, killing Russians in Russia "without trial."

Signor Villari writes also in your issue of January 17, this time about Danzig. He says:

During the war between Poland and the Soviets in 1920 the Danzigers made the mistake of refusing to allow the transit of munitions through their port.

The Signor is quite wrong in his facts, though I do not doubt he heard them so stated by the Danzigers or the Poles at this time of day—it is so convenient to be forgetful when it suits one. Actually, Danzig at that period was completely under the control of the French and British military authorities, and munition ships did unload there. There was the famous case of the steamship *The Jolly George*, which created quite a stir at the time. The Thames dockers refused to load her, so she went to another British port, loaded up there and sailed for Danzig, where she unloaded those munitions; she returned to England and again loaded up for Danzig. Her movements and those of other munition ships passing through the Kiel Canal were duly chronicled in the shipping news. All this and much more was published in our Press at the time.

In December last a Sunday paper, the *Observer*, was running a correspondence about "Truthful (and untruthful) Text-books." How can histories and text-books be written truthfully when events so comparatively recent as the above can be thus distorted? Personally I have become accustomed to this falsification of history—especially from the new States bordering on Russia. Only recently I read a book written a year or two ago by Sir Ernest Benn about Russia, all based—as he himself declares—on information culled during a tour of these very border States! The value of it can be judged from the fact that in his section dealing with Finland and the "Red Rebellion" he omits all mention of the German troops—a division complete with artillery—by whose aid alone the Finnish "Whites" were enabled to crush the "Reds," who were a majority of the nation. In front of me as I write is General Mannerheim's manifesto of welcome addressed to these German troops as they landed on Finnish soil at the beginning of March, 1918.

I am, etc.,

J. C. MACGREGOR

THE IRISH SWEEPSTAKES

SIR,—Referring to your article on the opening of private letters in this connexion I should like to add that to my knowledge a number of specially important business transactions between England and Ireland have been recently interfered with by letters being held up for three weeks or even a longer period. The present Ministry have put quite enough grit into the wheels of commerce already, without indulging in espionage which is not merely futile but may turn out to be illegal.

I am, etc.,

E. S. P. HAYNES

9 New Square,
Lincoln's Inn, W.C.2

REAR LAMPS FOR CYCLISTS

SIR,—Your correspondent "Searchlight," of Birmingham, has acted for the public's good by urging that cyclists should be compelled to carry rear lamps. When he says, however, that cyclists are "lax" about their reflectors he is underestimating the case. I took a census of cyclists I passed the other day, and I found that about 25 per cent. of them were not carrying reflectors at all! The police do not seem to trouble much about them, the reason, perhaps, being that without headlights the absence of a reflector cannot be detected.

Cyclists would not be able to evade the law in the same way if they were compelled to carry lamps. I am surprised that the otherwise excellent Road Traffic Act has overlooked this point; but it is never too late to mend.

I am, etc.,

VALERIE SPENCE

Barnet Green,
Worcs.

SIR,—As a member of both the C.J.C. and the A.A. I wish to oppose "Searchlight's" suggestion that cyclists should be compelled to have rear lamps. If a motorist turns down his headlamps, it is his business to go slowly and with the utmost caution. Such caution would be still urgently necessary if cyclists were compelled to have rear lamps, for there are such persons as pedestrians, who certainly have a right to part of the road and cannot be compelled to carry rear lamps.

When "Searchlight" goes on to suggest rear lamps plus reflectors, he still further exemplifies his faulty logical faculty. The rear lamp will go out, *ex hypothesi*, and the reflector will be an additional safeguard. Cyclists have chiefly opposed rear lamps because they know both that lamps do go out on bad roads, etc., and that if a collision takes place the lamp is still more likely to go out, if it is not knocked into smithereens. The baser sort of motorist is sure, if involved in an accident, to assert truly or untruly that the cyclist's lamp was out. And so the reflector, if properly fixed, is a far better safeguard than a lamp which can go out or suffer damage in various ways.

As regards "findings at inquests" I can only say that the verdicts of many juries when motorists come before them do more credit to the softness of their hearts than the soundness of their reasoning powers. The indifference with which the community at large regards the heavy death-roll on the roads, due so largely to the carelessness or callousness of a certain type of motorist, is astounding.

I am, etc.,

J. H. E. CREES
(Head Master)

Cathedral School, Hereford

Correspondents are asked to type or to write their letters on one side only of the paper. Very heavy pressure on space compels us also to request that they keep their letters as short as possible.

NEW NOVELS

BY H. C. HARWOOD

- Poor Caroline.* By Winifred Holtby. Cape. 7s. 6d.
Rachel Moon. By Lorna Rea. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.
The Growing Trees. By Ruth Manning-Sanders. Faber and Faber. 7s. 6d.
Mirthful Haven. By Booth Tarkington. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.
The Black Box. By M. P. Shiel. Richards. 7s. 6d.
Armoured Doves. By Bernard Newman. Jarrolds. 7s. 6d.
Murder Gone Mad. By Philip Macdonald. Crime Club (Collins). 7s. 6d.

HERE, to begin with, are three good books written by three good novelists. What surprises me is not their goodness but the flavour of it. Ten, eight, or even five years ago these women, if they had desired their work to be noticed, would have had to be cynical and knowing. References should have been made to Vienna, or at least to Zurich. All would have been for the worst in the worst of all possible worlds. To-day, though Miss Holtby, Mrs. Rea and Mrs. Sanders are dealing with slightly abnormal characters, psychology has been replaced by sympathy. Warmth and comfort prevail over pseudo-science. It almost seems that as dresses grow longer hearts grow fonder, and this is sure, that in every sense of that much abused word these women's imagination is nice.

Miss Holtby has taken as her theme the conflict raging—as it must always rage—between idealism and the petty compromises necessitated by L. S. D. Caroline rose above it. She had no money and very little sense, but through all her absurdities she drove on towards beauty, the beauty that dwells upon pure and simple faith. Nobody believed as Caroline did in the future of the Christian Cinema Company. Nobody but Caroline could have lain in a workhouse infirmary still going through the motions of a moral reformer and financial magnate. Strangers, among whom her relations must be included, thought old Caroline a fool. Certainly she was a difficult person to get on with, and perhaps it would have been best if she had taken an old age pension or gone into an almshouse or something. Caroline died. Defeated? In her own peculiar way she won.

This sweet and sensible book, 'Poor Caroline,' is heartily recommended to all lovers of a good story.

Mrs. Rea's 'Rachel Moon' is in my opinion even better than 'Six Mrs. Greenes.' It would have been so easy to cast fun at Rachel, who preferred to matrimony the safety of looking after mother. Mrs. Rea decides to show that a girl may, stage by stage, sacrifice everything for a lost ideal. At the end, of course, Rachel grows a little mad. She renounces the life that lay open to her and sinks herself in the kind of self-sacrifice that has neither relevance nor strength.

Mrs. Sanders, breaking away for once from village excitement, has composed a darling book in which the admirable young man nearly gets married to a worthless creature. But Netta wanted money, and eventually married it, while James was left with the hope of marrying Prothe when she grew up. There is nothing much in 'The Growing Trees' but the swish of strange birds' wings and sad delight. Better books have been written. But here is a quiet glory, and humour, and sense. Not a novel to be missed.

Mr. Booth Tarkington takes his holidays in Maine, and 'Mirthful Haven' is a result of his comfortable explorations. Esteeming Mr. Tarkington as I do, it is with some regret that I find myself condemned to

denounce this book as slow, tedious and unimaginative. Once there seems to be a stir in this pool of molasses, and that is when Edna talks to Gordon about drowned sailors. Then, and then only, we seem to be getting somewhere. For the rest, the old stock characters painfully parade their old stock desires. And, conventional as the plot is, everything has to be explained three times over. Possibly Mr. Tarkington is right in supposing that the majority of his readers are mentally deficient. This is a secret between him and his public. But I cannot believe that so much slush was needed to expand a short story into a long novel.

That extraordinary person, Mr. M. P. Shiel, has written a sheer detective story, but has not failed to intercalate it with pure Shielisms. "It was the dead whom she dreaded in her depths—or, say, rather shrank from their oddity and foreign manners, they preoccupied with their own customs, addicted to corruption, dust in their faded hair, she a new pin fresh from the forge of the sun, addicted to her own customs." Or again: "But she lit no lamp; only tossed on coals, until a spring of flame was prating the stream of oratory of some prophet preaching with jerking knees which ever jerk up his dishevelled urgency and passion of tatters." This is not a sound watertight detective story, since so much is concealed, but it has that Elizabethan fury which Mr. Shiel, alone among our contemporaries, knows how to impart to even the least considerable of his works. And 'The Black Box' is not that, although it does show its author a little fretted by the Procrustean engine of criminal logic.

'Armoured Doves' is an interesting fantasy with an important, if far from original, theme. Paul's mother was French, and his father one of the German invaders of 1914. From his origin and his experiences during the Russo-Polish War of 1942 he draws an intense hatred of war and founds a League of Scientists which by the use of a ray—dear old ray!—can paralyse machinery. This ray is tested at the outbreak of the Franco-German war of 1961 and proves efficacious. Moreover, members of both the Governments concerned, including Paul's father and father-in-law, are kidnapped and executed.

As a story, 'Armoured Doves' is disappointing. None of the characters stands out against the enormous background—fifty years of Europe—nor persuades us to take an interest in his or her individual loves, loyalties, distress. The style is that popular in Edwardian melodrama, save for excursions into that of the 'Annual Register.' Moreover, the author prefers saying a thing is tremendously impressive to making it seem so. As a tract, the novel is vitiated by its reliance upon force to conquer force. Nearly all of us who are over thirty detest the idea of war and would welcome a civilization in which the attack of one people upon another was regarded as ludicrous, like the attempt of a worried householder to silence his neighbour's loud speaker by hamstringing the neighbour's children. Mr. Newman, however, offers us, not peace, but bigger and better wars; more scientific, directed by well-educated gentlemen of diverse nationalities, but still violent if more discriminatingly destructive. There is, too, an element of religious phraseology which will repel more than it will attract. Not long ago the chairman of a Labour Party meeting made a pleasing statement reported in the Press and well worth quotation: "You must not attack MacDonald, Snowden, Henderson: they have passed through Gethsemane." As a description of our Foreign Secretary's career this may be misleading, but in its light use of sacred images it can be ranked with Mr. Newman's likening of his hero to Christ. After all, to murder one's father is not equivalent to being the Son of God.

To any discerning lover of detective fiction it is unnecessary to recommend 'Murder Gone Mad.'

REVIEWS

HENRY ADAMS

Letters of Henry Adams. Edited by Worthington Ford. Constable. 21s.

WHEN I was a young student in Paris I knew Henry Adams, the famous author of 'The Education of Henry Adams.' He had already discovered Chartres Cathedral. He was still writing endless letters to Mrs. Cameron, with which this collection swells and bursts. He was regarded as a patriarch in an American Colony which had not yet extended to an empire. A strange, pessimistic scorner of times and places, he lived in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne—by some he was nicknamed the Cardinal and by others the Porcupine. But to inquiring youth he was courteous, cynical and brilliantly informative. He was little more than a retiring historian. Among the French he was vaguely rumoured to be a retired President. For American pilgrims he was greater than either of those categories. He was an Adams of Boston, which in the New World is as archaic and venerable and blue-blooded as if he claimed to be an Adamson of Eden in the Old.

President Hayes once described Henry Adams as a "dull dog," but he was the liveliest of correspondents and when he had selected a suitable recipient, he wrote folios and reams of foolscap of matter, which was all readable once and which is worth preservation (even when all the political and half the social and personal interest is as dead as mutton) for some cynical or humorous turn of the pen. Henry Adams was a prosy Horatio Walpole, and if he had studied Walpole's art as well as his total detachment, he would have written as valuable critiques from the front stalls of Life's Comedy. As early as 1860 he wrote to a brother: "Though I have no ambition nor hope to become a Horace Walpole, I still would like to think that a century or two hence, when everything else about it is forgotten, my letters might still be read and quoted as a memorial of manners and habits at the time of the great secession of 1860." He gives good accounts of Seward and President Buchanan: "The President divides his time between crying and praying; the Cabinet has resigned or else is occupied in committing treason. Some of them have done both." Washington in the lull of war is well described. Sumner, Douglas (and in the background Lincoln) live again. Mrs. Douglas's ball is a graphic masterpiece. The next year Adams was sent to the American Legation in London and we have a sheaf of letters describing English Society in the 'sixties with more than a tinge of Thackeray. "Everyone looks intensely bored. Nobody enjoys it and nobody can enjoy it. These great routs are a sort of canonization of mediocrity. No one attempts to have a good time, and if they did, they would be voted vulgar." He assisted his father through the difficult days of the Civil War when he represented the United States in London. He was in Rome when Lincoln was assassinated and wrote to his brother: "I have already buried Mr. Lincoln under the ruins of the Capitol along with Cæsar."

Henry Adams had an historian's prevision and realized the world power of the United States from the moment of Lee's surrender: "We wield a prodigious influence on European politics now and the time is coming when the world will see it with painful clearness. At the same time we have never touched an intrigue. . . ."

He visits Baden and sums up an age in one delicious sentence: "Lord Houghton arrived too late to give another breakfast to Cora Pearl." It is untranslatable into modern equivalents. Even Mr. Marsh and Lady Colefax put together would not make a Lord Houghton, and there are no great demi-mondaines left to entertain. Adams taught history awhile at Harvard

before retiring to watch the horrible disintegration of democracy under the forces of corruption and high-mindedness. He visited President Grant at the White House. "At last Mrs. Grant strolled in. She squints like an isosceles triangle, but is not more vulgar than some duchesses."

And so with bitter pen and genial heart he camped in the city where his ancestors had ruled as Presidents. He described himself well enough in 1889: "I am as dead as a mummy myself, but don't mind it. As a ghost I am rather a success in a small way, not to the world, but to my own fancy, which I presume to be a ghost's world as it is mine. Things run by with spectre-like silence and quickness." It was twenty-five years later before he joined the ghosts.

He was at his best a travelling correspondent, provided he had a small and brilliant circle to enjoy his letters. Two sets are enjoyable reading—descriptive of Japan in the 'eighties and Samoa in the 'nineties.

A mass of letters describe a voyage with La Farge the painter into the South Seas. Once more Samoa becomes the quarry of an industrious pen. The customs and scenery are described minutely almost to tediousness. It is extraordinary how much space that one island has taken in English literature. Henry Adams was received with signal honours as his name coincided with that of an American frigate known to all the natives. "I am the first American who has ever visited the country merely for pleasure." His study of the Samoans proved them a purely Eugenic race: "Their real art is social and they have done what in theory every scientific society would like to do—they have bred themselves systematically. Love marriages are unknown. The old chiefs select the wives for the young chiefs and choose for strength and form rather than beauty of face. Each village elects a girl to be the village maiden and she is the tallest and best-made girl of the good society of the place. The consequence is that the chiefs are the handsomest men you can imagine, physically Apollos. . . ."

Samoa Art concentrates on fine mats, whose value is concentrated in one sentence: "The gift of a fine mat will pay for a life and the last war was caused by an attempt to confiscate mats."

Samoa conjures up Stevenson, and Henry Adams gives us a most unexpected picture of the Stevensons in their newly found demesne. It is totally unlike all other golden dreams of the novelist in the South Seas. It is petty, mean and malicious, and, coming from the kind-hearted Adams, seems incredible. But he was writing to amuse the beloved Mrs. Cameron at all costs and it must have seemed fantastically funny to catch celebrities in slippers and nightshirts. The explanation is that the Stevensons had just squatted upon virgin jungle, clearing the space and living their lives like pioneers in any new country. Later they fashioned the stately house which became the chosen Government House of the island—filled with fine furniture and staffed by native servants in a distinctive dress. Later he could be described as living in a Bungalow off Paradise. But at the moment that Henry Adams called, he was on the move and it was cruel for a guest to call attention to the temporary establishment in such words as: "We came on a clearing dotted with burned stumps exactly like a clearing in our backwoods. In the middle stood a two-story Irish shanty with steps outside to the upper floor, and a galvanized iron roof. A pervasive atmosphere of dirt seemed to hang around it and the squalor like a railroad navvy's board hut. As we reached the steps, a figure came out that I cannot do justice to. Imagine a man so thin and emaciated that he looked like a bundle of sticks in a bag, with a head and eyes morbidly intelligent and restless. He was costumed in a dirty striped cotton pyjamas. With him was a woman who retired for a moment into the house to reappear a moment afterwards, but as far as I could see, the change could only have consisted in putting shoes on her bare feet." More sentences acutely descriptive of squalor

it was unfair of any American editor and unseemly for any English publisher to reproduce. Adams himself was a great letter-burner and wrote that his Polynesian experiences were private. His only intention was to amuse the fastidious Mrs. Cameron at Mrs. Stevenson's expense. We acquit Henry Adams of any desire to make publicity or literary capital. His account of Stevenson is more psychological:

"We like him, but he would be an impossible companion. His face has a certain beauty, especially the eyes, but it is the beauty of disease. He is a strange compound of callousness and susceptibility and his susceptibility is sometimes more amusing than his callousness . . . part of Stevenson's talk was altogether the most humorous and as grotesque as the 'New Arabian Nights'; but Stevenson was not in the least conscious of our entertainment . . . the oriental delicacy of La Farge seems to be doubled by the Scotch eccentricities and barbarisms of Stevenson, who is as one-sided as a crab and flies off at angles, no matter what rocks stand in his way."

It is difficult to know what to make of these survivals of Adams's letters, the best of which and most intimate and cynical were too often destroyed by their writer. But he should have made up his mind early whether to be a philosopher or a traveller or an historian or a letter-writer. He showed himself capable of all, but left only tantalizing fragments of his varied powers.

SHANE LESLIE

THE ANTARCTIC AT LEISURE

Little America: Aerial Exploration in the Antarctic and the Flight to the South Pole.
By R. E. Byrd. Putnam. 21s.

ADMIRAL BYRD'S large expedition justified a heavy expenditure. Four stout volumes are to deal with the scientific results, and this one displays fully and admirably the human interest of a year's stay on the edge of the Bay of Whales in the settlement of "Little America," the dash to the Pole, the much stiffer struggles of the geological party which was out with sledges for three months on end, and other adventures.

Any attempt to approach the Pole means a dangerous passage through shifting ice which may easily disable a ship; fog and storms make guide-poles useless and reduce visibility to a few yards; and unexpected crevasses spell danger to the most careful, while the barometer affords no certain presage of coming weather. But Admiral Byrd's remarkable forethought and elaborate preparations brought him through all difficulties.

He managed his men with a tact to which they readily responded, keeping them busy, safe and healthy. They were perpetually learning and experimenting during the long winter. The whole expedition was a triumph of organization, applied science and new ingenuity. "Little America" had a library of 3,000 books and the "pictures" on Sundays. Some of its men started as greenhorns, but all ended as experts and all worked loyally. Ninety tons of coal were transferred in twelve hours and soon after a Blue Whale of the same weight was seen captured by whalers. The modern process of whaling differs widely from that celebrated in 'Moby Dick,' a fact that hardly emerges from the Admiral's brief account. Another real thrill was the pursuit of a small motor-boat by ten Killer whales which could have smashed it in a moment. It was raced at full speed off the water:

The nearest ice edge was 300 yards away, and very ragged.

At the moment, however, any kind of firm ice looked good. Scott took a cinema camera to the Pole, but the wonder of wireless, here called "radio," had not been

invented to make isolation impossible, to tell of a coming ship, or to explain an accident which, unknown, would have caused wearing anxiety. The Pole was reached on a swift aeroplane carefully designed for the purpose and aerial photographs were taken along the route. Another aeroplane was lifted and broken to pieces by a terrific wind which conquered desperate efforts to hold it on the ice. Not the least heroes were the dogs, Greenland huskies with an indomitable spirit, fighting, playing, howling and amazingly keen for hard work. In the snow they were capable of marching all night 63 miles in a temperature which reached 40 degrees below zero.

The copious detail of the book should be invaluable to anyone who proposes to tackle Polar conditions.

VERNON RENDALL

MOB VERSE AND TWO POETS

- Eve.* By Teresa Hooley. Cape. 3s. 6d.
Pass, Stranger. By Mrs. Peyton Mackeson. Constable. 5s.
Red Clover. By M. M. Johnson. Chapman and Hall. 5s.
Collected Songs and Lyrics. By the Hon. Stephen Coleridge. Bodley Head. 5s.
Mystery and Tragedy. By T. Sturge Moore. Cayme Press. 7s. 6d.
Collected Poems of Stephen Crane. Knopf. 7s. 6d.

ALL the first four of these writers celebrate the Spring, and it will be instructive, if a little cruel, to see how they do it.

First Miss Hooley:

Daffodils dance upon the lawn;
Blackbirds and thrushes sing at dawn,
And skylarks scatter notes as sweet
Above the tender blades of wheat;
Leaf-buds are green on twig and bough;
Playful the silly lambs. . . .

Then, a trifle better, Mrs. Mackeson:

The early sparrows cheep about the roof,
And in the silver cadences of air
The blackbird finds a root and whistles to his mate,
Whose brooding heart is filled with light surprises
In the dark of ancient boughs.

Miss Johnson gives us a blue-tit instead of the usual Turdidae:

Calls the blue-tit now the trees among
His thin sweet song—his thin sweet song:
Soft falls the sunlight pale and clear—
Now Spring awakens: Spring is here!

but Mr. Coleridge returns to the genus in his Devon garden, which must be distinguished by its odd ornithology:

I've the cottage down out Devon way,
With a garden and a stream
And a lawn with leaning apple trees
That droop their limbs and dream.

And the robins and the thrushes
And the little Jenny wren
Are nesting in the bushes,
For the spring is round again.

How is it that such stuff finds readers and publishers? It was written and written better six hundred years ago:

The threstlecoc him threteth oo
Away is huere wynter wo,
When woderove springeth;
This foules singeth ferly fele,
Ant wlyteth on huere winter wele,
That al the wode ryngeth.

and no doubt it has been written six thousand times since. Evidently it has a public, for, year by year, volumes containing such shoddy appear, some of them

now and then selling well and finding their meed of meretricious heralding in the Press.

In themselves these four volumes are harmless, their contents only a little worse than much which has firmly fixed itself in twentieth-century anthologies, but that they exist at all is enough to anger anyone with an affection for poetry. It is some comfort to turn to Mr. Roy Campbell:

And who would contradict when, in the spring,
The English Muse her annual theme rehearses
To tell us birds are singing in the sky?
Only the poet slams the door and curses,
And all the little sparrows wonder why!

To put Mr. Sturge Moore in the same pen is unkind, for 'Mystery and Tragedy' demands respect. Mr. Moore is an elder poet and a hard one to place. His work is never sloppy; every line shows pangs of difficult birth and evidence of most careful craftsmanship. He is, moreover, a thinker, though seldom easy to understand. These two dramatic poems, 'Psyche in Hades' (the mystery) and 'Daimonassa' (the tragedy) bear his hall-mark. They are worth reading, but though I admire their strength and originality of language, I find such classical pieces intruders in 1931, a little dull and academic. To settle down to their stiff blank verse is a labour of determination.

By contrast, Stephen Crane, who died in 1900, is clear as acid or sharp crystal. His two books of poems (if they deserve the name), 'The Black Riders' (1895) and 'War is Kind' (1899) are better known in America than England. They contain short ironic parables in rather textureless free verse:

I saw a man pursuing the horizon;
Round and round they sped.
I was disturbed at this;
I accosted the man.
"It is futile," I said,
"You can never—"

"You lie," he cried,
And ran on.

His method was certainly novel and it has caused him to be called historically important in the development of American poetry. Yet his technique is unvaried and monotonous, and the spirit of his parables, unsentimental and bitter as they are, very much the same.

GEOFFREY GRIGSON

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

A Journal of My Journey to Paris in the year 1765. By the Rev. William Cole. Edited from the Original MSS. by Francis Griffin Stokes. Introduction by Helen Waddell. Constable. 16s.

THOUGH the literary instinct is common, and though there is no surer way of attracting the friendly interest of posterity, few would-be writers cultivate the diary habit. We all throw away into the waste-paper basket of oblivion more than half the good things that we hear and see, simply because the effort of writing them down in a note-book is too much for our indolence. Yet all diaries prove that nothing is more entertaining than the unconsidered trifles of daily life. I have never seen a dull diary. Dullness is impossible to the form. A daily jotting of appointments and engagements can be no more interesting than a shopping list, but this is no more a diary than a collection of platitudinous reflections; and the dull so-called diaries that I have seen have always proved to be engagement-lists or abstract observations. The diary is the only palatable form that bare fact can take in literature. It should be a treasury of little details, of things done, people met, sights seen and words heard. In the record of them the diarist will sufficiently reveal himself, for a diary is nothing but a record of the things that made the interest of the diarist's daily life.

The Rev. Mr. Cole, whose Paris journal has now been rescued from the MSS. in the British Museum, was Rector of Bletchley, from his schooldays the life-long friend of Horace Walpole, and like Walpole an antiquarian and a bachelor. After leaving Eton for a fellowship at King's, Mr. Cole settled down to his country living, and apparently at the age of fifty-one he spent the autumn of the year 1765 in Paris. With the beginning of the new year he was home once more, when he resolved to transcribe the diary that he had kept, and thus appeared the amplified journal in the form that we now have it. The habit endured for five years, but Mr. Stokes has begun with the first half, which covers Mr. Cole's stay in Paris. While, therefore, the book has the attraction of travel, and contains precious glimpses of the last days of pre-revolutionary France; while Horace Walpole, who was a fellow-traveller, figures in its pages, the main charm of the book is the figure of Mr. Cole bustling to and fro, refusing to be overcharged by his French landlady and by the French valet who insisted on being engaged by him, seeing the sights, enjoying his Beaune, hunting in churches and china-shops, and annoyed by the dampness of his bed, the butcher's meat that disfigured every street-corner, the "mean-ness" of the famous city, and the "nasty manners" of its boastful but penurious people. Mr. Cole was not naturally a grumbler; he did his best to please, but he charmed no casual acquaintance by his efforts at flattery. He was an honest Englishman, prepared to like everyone and everything, having even dallied with the idea of finding a hermitage for his declining years in the French capital, and we are forced from his record to conclude that Paris in the year 1765 had many drawbacks. Yet he always tries to be fair, even to Dissenters. Noting that the altar in a church at Douay was not at the east end but in the middle, Mr. Cole writes:

This taste and fashion is now very prevalent in France . . . to imitate the position of the High Altar of St. Peter's

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Church at Rome which is so placed. As this is the practice of the Church of Rome, unhappily for the Presbyterians, their old objections about the Popery of the Church of England in placing their Communion Table altar-fashion against the east wall of the choir are no more; and if it was worth while to retaliate so ridiculous an argument against so perverse a Sect, one might observe that their table in the middle of their meetings, if it is so placed, is more consonant to the Popish Church than our own.

He recounts, with due reserve, extraordinary stories of Lady Mary Wortley Montague with which Madame Geoffrin, the lady who wore no stays and appeared to have just scrambled out of bed when she joined him at Horace Walpole's, diverted him one evening. He was a great sight-seer, and after he had finished breakfast at eleven o'clock would take a coach and visit churches, convents, and public buildings until he returned exhausted at four, when he would have his dinner sent in and sit by a good fire until it was time to go to bed. Sometimes he went shopping and found a place where Sèvres porcelain was on sale, and "where the mistress was as tempting as the things she sold, and where a younger man than myself would run great risk of losing what is of more value than money . . . so that it is no wonder that such a shop was thronged with customers." The antiquarian fills, perhaps, too many pages with descriptions of monuments, things which no words can convey to one unfamiliar with them, but there is something for most tastes in this book, and the sturdy diarist becomes a friendly possession long before we have finished with him. His journeys out and home, with the little or amusing dilemmas of travel, give him his best opportunities. He is more lively upon people than upon places, and he returned home assured, from his experience, of the superiority of England and of Englishmen.

Miss Waddell's introduction should not be missed. She is sympathetic to Mr. Cole and has skimmed the cream of his stories. Neither she nor Mr. Stokes, however, gives more than parsimonious information of Mr. Cole himself, and we would willingly hear anything more that can be gleaned of him. The volume is enriched with a wonderful old map, in which one can almost observe the very houses, and the whole book will repay any reader who loves a diary, a journey, old Paris, or an Englishman.

OSBERT BURDETT

IN DEFIANCE OF CONVENTIONS

Sin and Sex. By Robert Briffault. Introduction by Bertrand Russell. Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d.

THIS is a courageous book, which might almost have been called 'In Defiance of Conventions.' Mr. Briffault is rather inclined to force his opinions on the reader, but he writes vigorously and sincerely.

Having taken his fate into his hands over the title he might well have let himself go more. There is too much padding and there is much left unsaid which might well have been said. "Puritan tradition, combined with the Christian management of adolescence, has converted the sexual life of civilized men and women into a neurosis." The keynote of the book is contained in this quotation from it (p. 110) and it rings true. But Mr. Briffault's criticism is almost entirely destructive. He attacks the anthropologists and pulls our civilized conventions to pieces, but he does not tell us what to do about it all.

Mr. Briffault's ideal seems to be to get back to nature. "As in every other function of life, health and sanity lie in moderate activity. Whether a man or woman is continent or the reverse, his or her sex life will be healthy so long as it is not

artificially over-stimulated or over-repressed"; and he holds that sin, in the true sense of the word, is far more the result of sexual repression than of sexual freedom. We are given examples of the moral superiority of the unmoral savages of the Andaman Islands (and such other places) over our citizens, but we are not given a practical working remedy. Surely Mr. Briffault does not mean us to imitate the savage in his treatment of women?

He tells us that: "The virtuous and respectable savage in the Nicobar Islands, if he sees a young woman he desires, goes up to her and demands to have sexual intercourse with her there and then; and, if she should demur, is so incensed at her lack of common civility that he takes up his cudgel and kills her, and is held by public opinion to be quite justified." Mr. Briffault cannot really mean us to behave like that.

He ends up on a truer and more courageous note: "Sex is no more impure and base than it is noble. But furtiveness, secretiveness, and hypocrisy are base. . . . Christian morality has created sin. It has set up the artificial stimulus of taboos to be furtively, secretly, and libidiously broken, and rendered the ingenuity of civilized pruriency morbid as compared with the frank lusts of the savage."

THE FIRST EVANGELIST

Studies in Matthew. By Benjamin Wisner Bacon. Constable. 18s.

AWORK by Professor Bacon is an event in New Testament scholarship. The present book is presented as a substitute for a volume which should have followed Vol. I of a series of "modern" commentaries on the Gospel in 1917 (withdrawn on account of printing difficulties). The book is really divided into

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two parts, the first treating of the main problems of synoptic criticism, the external and internal evidence for the date of the First Gospel, and its incorporation into the canon, being discussed with great care. The second part deals with the contents of the First Gospel in particular. There is a splendid translation of the text of the Gospel in an attractive English idiom which will not jar on the ears of those who love the Authorized Version. All the passages are conveniently classified according to the author's idea of their sources—roughly, some nine in number, including, of course, "Q," or the "Double Tradition."

But the general reader will do well to turn to the section on "Themes of Matthew," for there we learn precisely why this Gospel is to be valued as something of priceless worth; for, although it may have been written for Jewish Christians, it contains—according to the writer—some of the finest and most distinctive ideas in the religion of Christ, and, what is of chief importance, works them into the particular texture of the thought of the time. Professor Bacon shows how "a late and degenerate type of synoptic tradition" does through "S" (a second source) at any rate, incorporate material of "golden quality." So "the living Torah of a good Samaritan, on the word of Jesus, has more divine authority than that of priest or Levite who neglects the 'weightier matters of the law.' It is what he finds in the Scriptures, not his sacerdotal or legal proficiency, which distinguishes Jesus's attitude towards the Torah from that of the Scribes." We may at least be thankful that the Jesus of Matthew valued the Scriptures!

Some may not find Professor Bacon's account of "the late and apocryphal" elements in Matthew entirely satisfactory. These refer mainly, of course, to the Passion and Resurrection narratives. Students of the Gospels are well aware of the discrepancy between the Lucan and the Marcan accounts of the post-Resurrection appearances. Here we are informed that Mark's story of the empty sepulchre did not belong to the original apostolic Resurrection Gospel. It came in later, and then "the horizon of Jew and Christian alike is bounded by the letter of Mark." So there are, in Matthew, many traces of degeneracy from the pristine purity of primitive tradition. Nevertheless, "This late Gospel holds indeed a golden treasure . . . in an earthen vessel. . . . And this . . . tells the story of its age. It shows us the adaptation of the everlasting Gospel to the post-apostolic age and environment, a story which . . . makes the meaning of the treasure itself larger and richer than before."

A SILLY BOOK

If It Had Happened Otherwise: Lapses Into Imaginary History. Edited by J. C. Squire. Longmans. 21s.

IT is very difficult to account for the publication of this book upon any ordinary grounds. No doubt it is interesting to speculate upon what would have happened had certain historical events taken a different turn, and it is possible that such musings might in certain circumstances make an attractive tome, but the present volume has none of the merit that might achieve such a result. In the first place, the contributors have clearly been chosen with an eye to their selling power rather than to their historical qualifications, and, in the second, the events about which they write would, for the most part, not have altered the course of history to any appreciable extent had they gone the other way. Lastly, the book is extremely ill-balanced, for, presumably in the hope of an American edition, more than a quarter of it is devoted to imaginary happenings in the New World. In short, Mr. Squire clearly has not the necessary gifts to edit a work of this nature, and it would have

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been better for his reputation had he not succumbed to the temptation, more particularly as his own contribution, on the supposition that it was discovered last year that Bacon wrote Shakespeare, is easily the most puerile of all.

There is, however, one first-rate sketch, and one only: Herr Ludwig's interpretation of recent German history on the assumption that the Emperor Frederick did not die of cancer. The line taken is as unexpected as it is carefully thought out, and it is that Frederick would have co-operated with Bismarck, with the result that the Hohenzollerns are to-day constitutional German Emperors. Herr Ludwig is to be congratulated upon the way in which he has worked out his hypothesis, and his essay is worthy to rank with that of Professor G. M. Trevelyan on 'If Napoleon Had Won Waterloo.' For the rest, one would like to ask Mr. Harold Nicolson whether he really thinks it would have made any difference had Byron become King of Greece, and Messrs. Waldman and G. K. Chesterton if they think the whole course of history would have been changed if Booth had missed Lincoln, and Don John of Austria had married Mary Queen of Scots.

It is the more to be regretted that this book is so poor in view of the fact that there are several historical "ifs" which might well have been included. Had Hannibal marched on Rome after Cannae, had Antony overcome Octavian, had Christ died in his bed of old age, had the Forty-Five been successful, had the Germans won the Battle of the Marne; these are speculations far more worthy of an historian's attention than the trivial incidents which seem to have caught the fancy of Mr. Squire and his ill-chosen team.

JAMES LINDSAY

SHORTER NOTICES

Newest Europe. By Martin MacLaughlin. Longmans. 6s.

THIS little book will supply a want that has been felt for several years. It gives a succinct account of the political situation in the leading European States, and it is difficult to know which to admire the more, the author's knowledge or his impartiality. He is at his best in his description of the Latin countries, and the pages devoted to an analysis of the present regimes in France, Spain, and Italy show that Mr. MacLaughlin's critical powers are of the very first order. In particular, he shows the weakness of the Spanish dictatorship in not having enlisted public opinion in its favour, while of Italy he very truly remarks: "No visitor can long remain in doubt of the almost universal popularity of the Government." Of Russia, he says that the danger to the Soviets comes from within, not from the exiles, and he predicts a wave of nationalist feeling among the subject races. Mr. MacLaughlin's work, in short, cannot be too highly praised, and its study should be made compulsory in every secondary school and university in the kingdom. It is to be hoped that its reception will be such as to encourage the author to expand it in the near future.

Palms and Patois: Andalusian Essays. By Rodney Collin. Heath Cranton. 7s. 6d.

MR. COLLIN has studied the South of Spain to some purpose, and, what is more, has succeeded in conveying his impressions to the reader. Indeed, this is one of the best books on Spanish travel that have appeared for some time, and not the least of its merits is that the author has stuck to his theme and resisted every temptation to indulge in political and religious disquisitions. Mr. Collin has a very considerable gift for descriptive writing, and although his pages portray all the luxuriance and colour of Andalusia, he never becomes turgid. The area covered comprises the usual

places visited by the tourist, but the work is in no sense a guide-book, though every traveller will be the richer for having Mr. Collin's volume in his suit-case. The illustrations are not only well chosen but are distinctly pleasing in themselves. A final chapter takes us further north, to Andorra, the tiny State that seems to have burst into fame of late for some obscure reason, but the author is at his best in the Mediterranean lands. Altogether, a book that can be thoroughly recommended.

Folk Tales of All Nations. Edited by F. H. Lee. Harrap. 8s. 6d.

FOLK tales were the philosophy of the primitive mind, the product of an essentially rural community, which, living close to nature, explained natural forces in terms of the supernatural. Their gods were local, and their identification of virtue with a Deity was rare. Pagan gods were good or evil in their relation to man, but that their character was necessarily better and finer than man's was the final stage in primitive religion. The gods were super-but not ideal men, and so these tales show the life and thought of the times not circumscribed in scope and drama by the limitations of human experience. Mr. Lee has collected myths, legends, and fairy tales from over sixty races, and has written a small preface to each on the outstanding features, which makes a delightful volume. The Celtic stories abound in superstition and the fairy motive, thus giving a clear picture of the simplicity of the peasant's life, and contrasting strongly with the more sophisticated French folk-lore of palaces and ball-rooms. All the magnificence of the Norse tales is here in their conflict of gods and giants; the Indian folk tales are recorded with their subtlety and charm but strange lack of humour; while the Chinese have lost much of their attraction for

THIS WEEK

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us in a complexity so fantastic as to be monotonous. Many similar stories, yet curiously different, are found among various nations showing a possible kinship and more certainly the influence of geography on the mind and imagination of man.

Jewels of Song: An Anthology of Short Poems. Compiled by W. H. Davies. Cape. 6s.

THIS attempt by the simplest of living poets "to bring together a number of little masterpieces within the limit of twenty-four lines" is of mixed value. To the good: all Shakespeare's songs and some of his sonnets. Nash's lovely 'Spring' and Wyatt's 'Vixi puellis' can never be reprinted too often; but did Mr. Davies really choose, from love and not from laziness, T. E. Brown's 'My Garden,' Henley's crude 'Invictus,' James Thomson's tiresome 'Gifts,' Christina Rossetti's most prosaic 'Up-hill'? In the wealth of English lyric, anthologists need not repeat each other to this degree; and the rest is so good, including two of Mr. Davies's own, that one does not forgive his lapses easily. Some of his "twenty-four lines" are also detached from longer lyrics, but that does not matter at all. His prose is always charming, and his preface is one of the "jewels."

New Zealand Memories. By Brenda Guthrie. The Bodley Head. 18s.

THIS book promises well at first sight, but disappoints on closer acquaintance, and one leaves it feeling that it does not deserve such an expensive edition. The author, who served with the N.Z. Medical Corps, starts by sketching the early life of the Dominion's pioneers, using as a framework the actual experiences of her grandparents, as handed down by her mother. The narrative is half-fictionalized, with her people as the important characters. So far it is novel, well served with anecdotes, and agreeably written; if it had kept to this scheme, it might well have been a welcome addition to the scanty literature concerned with New Zealand in early days. But in the story's present form didactic matter is too often dragged in by the short hair; for instance, several chapters are devoted to a lecture on the situation and conditions that would confront the settlers, purporting to be delivered by the doctor of an emigrant ship. Even the author of 'The Swiss Family Robinson' could not quite get away with that sort of thing. Besides, the personal record is much better dealt with than the historical, which is incomplete and misleading. It is a pity the two have not been either better blended or better separated. The final disappointment comes when one finds that a fair quarter of the book is an act of piety, being taken up by a collection of cheery but commonplace letters from the author's father to a friend, describing every sort of country bar in New Zealand. The volume is handsome and well illustrated, but one feels that one has been sold a pup—the kind with fish, flesh, fowl, and good red herring in his pedigree.

Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I. By J. R. Tanner. Cambridge University Press. 18s.

THE chief points which distinguish this collection from the well-known work of Prothero are its more limited scope and the comments of the author, which bring out very fully the important constitutional questions with which James had to deal. In these comments the character and kingcraft of James are more favourably treated than is usual among historians, and the book, which is a companion to 'Tudor Constitutional Documents,' will be found indispensable to students of university rank.

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DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 462

(CLOSING DATE: First post Thursday, February 12)

MATERIALS FOR FENCES HERE YOU'LL FIND,
METAL AND WOOD: MAY ONE BE TO YOUR MIND!

1. Wounded I'm dangerous: let your aim be true.
2. Extract his heart who schemed to hang a Jew.
3. Behold the gathered produce of the field.
4. Great floods of this but small result may yield.
5. E'en such a one the meekest mortal killed.
6. Stands yet: the prophet's word was not fulfilled.
7. Men fall and rise, I downwards go for ever.
8. A tumult from that faithless follower sever.
9. See her with tears her dear departed mourn!
10. Such is a road that has nor goal nor bourn.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 460

TWO GAMES IN WHICH ALL CHILDREN MAY ENGAGE:
THOSE OF MATURE, AND THOSE OF TENDER AGE.

1. Was none like Jack's from ADAM's day to this.
2. Fondness. Our monarch we must needs dismiss.
3. Grossly unjust, inequitable, wrong.
4. Vile, dreadful, villainous: words none too strong.
5. From theologian a plant detach.
6. Plot which our enemies against us hatch.
7. Befell the trembling prisoner at the bar.
8. Heard when steeds scent the battle from afar.
9. Word sometimes used when *deadlock's* what is meant.
10. Here for good ends your money may be spent.
11. From all that is this single line subtract.
12. A fable cunningly devised, no fact.
13. Since bread's the Staff of Life, it seems to me
That this a Basic Industry must be.

Solution of Acrostic No. 460

B	ean-stal	K	By torch and trumpet fast arrayed,
L	iquitous	Iking	Each horseman drew his battle-blade,
N	efariou	S	And furious every charger neighed
D	achination	S	To join the dreadful revelry.
A	rraignmen	Ivine	Campbell's 'Hohenlinden.'
N	eig	N	See also Job xxxix, 22-25.
S	talemat	T	A <i>deadlock</i> can be reached in chess, but
B	azaa	H	it is totally different from a <i>stalemate</i> ,
U	n	E	which brings the game to an end as
F	abricatio	R	promptly as checkmate does.
F	armin	Iverse	
		G	

ACROSTIC No. 460.—The winner is Mrs. Robt. Brown, 9 Broadwater Down, Tunbridge Wells, who has selected as her prize 'Edwardian Heydays,' by George Cornwallis West, published by Putnam's and reviewed in our columns by Shane Leslie on January 24. Thirty-three other competitors named this book, seven chose 'Vegetable Cookery,' seven 'A Year on the Great Barrier Reef,' etc., etc.

ALSO CORRECT.—A. E., Bolo, Mrs. Rosa H. Boothroyd, Boskerris, Carlton, Miss Carter, Clam, Cyril E. Ford, Fosil, Gean, Iago, Lilian, Madge, Mango, Martha, Met, N. O. Sellam, Penelope, Peter, Shorwell, Sisypheus, St. Ives, Tyro, W. R. Wolseley.

ONE LIGHT WRONG.—Ali, Barberry, E. Barrett, A. de V. Blathwayt, Boote, Buns, Ernest Carr, C. C. J., Maud Crowther, D. L., Estela, Falcon, Gay, Glamis, T. Hartland, Jeff, Miss Kelly, Mrs. Lole, A. M. W. Maxwell, J. F. Maxwell, George W. Miller, M. I. R., Rabbits, Shrub, H. M. Vaughan, C. J. Warden, Mrs. Violet G. Wilson.

TWO LIGHTS WRONG.—Bimbo, Boris, Charles G. Box, Bertram R. Carter, Farsdon, Reginald J. Hope, M. Milne, Lady Mottram, F. M. Petty, Raven, Rho Kappa, Stucco. All others more.

ACROSTIC No. 469.—Correct: Boote. One Light wrong: Boris.

Company Meetings

OLYMPIA, LIMITED

NEW BUILDING COMPLETED

The Second Annual General Meeting of Olympia, Limited, was held on January 30 in the Pillar Hall, Olympia, Kensington, W. Mr. Philip E. Hill (chairman of the company) presided.

The chairman said:—Ladies and gentlemen, the net profits for the year, after charging all expenses, including management, amount to £143,507 8s. 4d., which, in all circumstances, I hope you will consider satisfactory.

You will see from the balance sheet that we have taken our properties at the amount of the valuation at the time our last issue was made, disclosing a surplus of £453,514 7s. 5d., which has been carried to capital reserve account. Out of this we have written off the cost of the issue in February last, amounting to £39,453 12s. 10d., and we have written down the value of the company's plant, machinery and fixtures by the sum of £52,900, to the nominal figure of £100. In the opinion of the board these assets were conservatively valued at £53,000, but we thought it advisable to create this further reserve.

THE EMPIRE HALL

The company's new building, which in future is to be known as the "Empire Hall," has now been completed and handed over, and if you care to do so you will have an opportunity of inspecting it after the meeting. During the year the company has acquired the freehold interest in several adjoining properties in which they previously only held a leasehold interest, so that all the properties now owned by the company are freehold. I am glad to say that our lessees and tenants are all prosperous, and, without exception, pay what I consider to be very moderate rents.

It is not the intention of the board to depart from the policy that they originally laid down—namely, that the company would operate purely as a property company and would take no part in financing exhibitions or entertainments. The national necessity, in trade interests, of a building like Olympia becomes more apparent every day, and as the lettings of our new building increase we can reasonably look forward to additional revenue.

I now beg to move the adoption of the report and accounts. Mr. Louis Nicholas, F.C.A., seconded the resolution, and, after the chairman had replied to a few questions, it was carried unanimously.

ASHANTI GOLDFIELDS CORPORATION

The Thirty-Fourth Ordinary General Meeting of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation, Limited, was held on February 5 at River Plate House, E.C. Mr. James H. Batty (the chairman) said that during the past two years they had had exceptional geological conditions to deal with; it was mainly owing to that that they had decided to invite Dr. Malcolm MacLaren, the eminent geologist, to visit their property. Dr. MacLaren, in his report, stated that in lode fissures of the Ashanti-Obuasi type in Pre-Cambrian rocks gold ore might be expected to persist to great depths.

His report stated that the prospect of the concession yielding another great mine like that at Obuasi was not very hopeful. In depth, however, the old Ashanti shoot held out a real promise of further ore bodies, and vigorous exploration was urged.

Since 1925 they had made steady progress year by year in output and the profit, including London revenue, had increased from £137,155 to £320,561. He was confident that they would show still further progress during the present year. They had made a good start, the first three months showing a gross output of £173,023 and an estimated net profit of £95,425. Should those figures be repeated for the remainder of the year, the net profit would be in the region of £380,000 for the twelve months. They had been fortunate in keeping ore reserves in line with the increasing output each year, and at present they had in sight about five years' supply. For some years gold had been neglected and enterprise had centred on base metals. Now that base metals were below the parity of gold, he looked for a change and believed that they would see attention being given to gold enterprise in the near future.

With regard to the accounts, they could congratulate themselves on a very satisfactory financial position. The total profit was £320,561, an increase of nearly £117,000. They had paid an interim dividend of 35 per cent. and now recommended a final dividend of 65 per cent., making 100 per cent. for the year, as against 65 per cent. last year. It was proposed to increase the capital to £375,000, to alter the Articles in order to authorize the capitalization of profits or reserves and to make a bonus issue to the shareholders.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted; the proposed increase of capital was approved and at a subsequent extraordinary general meeting resolutions were passed altering the Articles and capitalizing £125,000 of undivided profits to enable the directors to make a capital bonus at the rate of 50 per cent. per share, free of tax, on the issued ordinary shares.

THE CITY

Lombard Street, Thursday

WEEK after week, in examining the conditions on the Stock Exchange and the various home and international factors which affect the volume of business transacted, and the level of prices at which it is transacted, one appears to be faced with ever-growing problems, with the outlook more and more shrouded in the fog of uncertainty. At one moment it appears that the position in this direction looks a little more hopeful, or the outlook from that angle more promising, only to find that the improvement has been purely temporary, if not entirely illusory. The question is frequently asked in the City, not when will the position change, but, what will cause the change. Admittedly, the general trade depression from which we are suffering is world-wide in its extent, and so is beyond the control of authority in this country, but, on top of that, we have our own troubles, and certainly it would supply some comfort if we could feel that once world conditions improved, we should regain our lost industrial position. This, unfortunately, does not seem to be the case. As far as we are concerned at home, the general consensus of considered opinion lies in the direction that working costs must be decreased. Two of the main causes for the high level of our working costs are wages and excessive taxation. Both these problems will have to be faced, yet at the moment there appears to be no sign on the part of those who represent Labour in the basic industries that they appreciate that this is the case, neither do we see in our present Government any appreciation of the fact that taxation can only be reduced by a policy of rigid national economy. We are suffering at home from drastic evils, and it would appear that their remedy will only come as the result of a drastic crisis. This is not a very cheerful outlook. At the same time, the position has now reached such a pitch that it does not appear that we shall be able to extricate ourselves from our existing troubles by the attitude so frequently adopted in the past in this country of letting things slide and subsequently muddling through.

The City of late has been alarmed at the efflux of gold and the depreciated value of sterling in foreign currencies. A temporary palliative of the position has been found by the Discount market stiffening rates. One is forced to wonder, however, whether the day will dawn when palliatives will be of no avail, when the confidence of foreign lenders will be shaken, and when international balances will be drawn from London, leading to the pound sterling depreciating to well under its par value. Should such a contingency arise, and without being an alarmist it is deemed possible, then the moment might prove opportune for drastic remedies to be employed. As a nation, we are prepared to make any necessary sacrifices in a phlegmatic and calm spirit. We need strong leaders, and the belief that our sacrifices are not merely essential, but will not be made in vain. When once these conditions are fulfilled, then it is suggested the tide will really turn in this country.

IMPERIAL TOBACCO

Although the price of the shares of the Imperial Tobacco Company of Great Britain and Ireland improved on the recent declaration of the final dividend, which showed an increase of $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. as compared with the previous year, bringing the total distribution for

the year ended October 31 last up to 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. free of tax, these shares are still standing at what is believed to be an under-valued price. Those seeking a thoroughly sound Industrial investment should not overlook the opportunity that is presented to them to purchase Imperial Tobacco shares at the present level, a level at which they would not be standing had it not been for the pessimistic utterances of the chairman of the British-American Tobacco Company a few weeks back. A fact that must not be overlooked in comparing these two companies is that, while the Imperial Tobacco Company enjoys the home trade, the British-American Tobacco Company deals with export trade, and, therefore, suffers from the unsettled conditions and depreciated currencies in various parts of the world.

OLYMPIA LTD.,

Perusal of the report of Olympia Limited for 1930 confirms the favourable opinion that has already been expressed in these notes as to the position of the company's 7 per cent. Cumulative Preference shares. These are now standing in the neighbourhood of 20s. The report showed that the net revenue amounted to £143,507, which slightly exceeded the prospectus estimate, and, after providing for the mortgage interest of £25,000, the balance was sufficient to cover the dividend on the 850,000 Preference shares practically twice. At the meeting held last week the chairman expressed the opinion that now that the Empire Hall had been completed, further revenue from this source might reasonably be expected in the future. He confirmed the fact that the directors' policy was to function as a property company and not to finance exhibitions or entertainments. These Olympia Preference shares appear suitable for mixing purposes.

VICKERS

The capital of Vickers Ltd. includes 5 per cent. tax free Cumulative Preference shares of £1 each. At the present price these shares show a gross yield of over 7 per cent. The dividend on these shares is paid free of income-tax up to 6s. in the pound, and the profits for the year ended December 31, 1929, showed they were covered two and a half times. Ranking before these shares there are £3,250,000 of Debenture stock, £750,000 of 5 per cent. Preferred stock, and £750,000 of 5 per cent. Non-cumulative Preference shares of £1. Ranking after these tax free Preference are £4,105,161 in Ordinary shares of a nominal value of 6s. 8d. each. Dividends of 8 per cent. have been paid on these Ordinary shares for the past two years. The company was drastically reorganized in 1925, since which satisfactory headway has been made, it is in a strong financial position, and should be able to emerge successfully from the present period of depression. In their class, these tax free Preference shares constitute a sound investment.

AUSTRALIA

The substantial discount to which the Australian pound has fallen is causing considerable alarm. No useful purpose can be served at this stage in recounting the causes which have led to the present position. While appreciating the extreme gravity of this state of affairs, one can only register the hope that in due course financial stability will be re-established, and the Commonwealth regain its past prosperity.

TAURUS

COMPANY MEETINGS

In this issue will be found reports of the meetings of the following companies: Olympia Ltd., South Metropolitan Gas Company and Ashanti Gold Fields.

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Company Meeting

South Metropolitan Gas Co.

Competition between Gas and Electricity

OFFICIAL ATTITUDE CRITICIZED

The Ordinary General Meeting of South Metropolitan Gas Company was held on February 4 at the Cannon Street Hotel, E.C.

Mr. Charles Carpenter, D.Sc., M.Inst.C.E. (the President), in the course of his speech said: The working results of the undertaking for the past twelve months are typical of many that have preceded them, and we might congratulate ourselves upon what we have accomplished were it not for the unprecedented happenings with which we are confronted, as, indeed, is the case with every other gas company in the Kingdom. We had a decrease in the sale of gas in the early months of the year, due to the fact that the temperatures then prevailing were above the average. Our sales are, of course, largely influenced to-day by changes in climatic, as distinct from seasonal, conditions, and this is owing to the important heating load. I am glad to say, however, that we are now making good this decrease, which for the year under review amounted to 2.97 per cent. We may also congratulate ourselves upon the small fraction, for it is now a fraction, to be exact .88 per cent., of the gas we produce which is unaccounted for. This low figure is a sure test of the efficient maintenance of our distributing plant, and it has only been attained by reason of the constant and intelligent care with which this part of our business is watched by the officials concerned.

The payment of a dividend at the rate of 1½ per cent. above the basic rate of 5 per cent. carries with it the obligation to divide among our employees a co-partnership bonus amounting in the aggregate to £83,874.

LEGISLATIVE FETTERS

I have never come with such a serious condition of things to place before you as I must now endeavour to do. Let me remind you, first of all, that for the greater part of a century we have carried on under statutory authority, and under statutory regulations and control, a business which has been, and still is for that matter, engaged in supplying one of the necessities of everyday life required by the bulk of the population. The methods of raising capital, the interest allowed upon it, the provision of reserves, and so forth, have all been subject to statutes and limitations laid down by the Parliament of the land, and it is interesting to observe that to-day's requirements as to allocating the profits made in the supply of electricity to the Metropolis are based upon those under which the gas companies have provided a co-ordinated service of a supply of smokeless and gaseous fuel. They insist that the service shall be primarily "for the public benefit, and not with the object of making the maximum profit first and affording public service after."

Now one often hears the remark, "Ah! electricity is only in its infancy," but it is fifty years or thereabouts since the Jabloch-koff electric candle first made its appearance upon the Thames Embankment. From that time the business of electric supply has gone on developing until it has become the extensive organization we know to-day. These two great industries of gas and electricity supply have gone on developing side by side, each recognizing that there were fields of usefulness for both, and each recognizing that both forms of energy possessed advantages and disadvantages peculiar to themselves, and each, as I have said, by its commercial and scientific activities stimulating its competitor.

OFFICIAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS GAS UNDERTAKINGS

Now, commercially, it is easier to advertise electricity than gas. We know quite well that it is only necessary to call a body-belt or a hair brush "electric" to ensure for it a ready sale. Gas has no such advantage: it is neither novel nor fashionable any more than is "Shanks's pony" as a mode of locomotion. Even so, and if gas undertakings are not wholly free from blame by reason of the fact that they have not used systematically and scientifically the medium of advertising, the fact remains that there are many people to-day who continue to use gas-lighting, not because they cannot get electricity, but because they prefer the pleasant warmth and soothing light of gas. It is possible that this omission to advertise the acknowledged advantages of gas-light is partly, though certainly not wholly, responsible for what I will call the official and, indeed, the Governmental attitude to-day towards gas undertakings. In a recent letter to the Press, Lieut.-Colonel Ogilvie records the fact that in nearly 100,000 municipally owned houses in this country the tenants are not allowed to choose the form of lighting or heating they prefer. He states that in thirteen areas the local authorities have prohibited the use of gas for any purposes whatever on their estates, and in forty-seven other cases specific uses of gas, that is, for lighting or heating, are forbidden.

This serious state of affairs has been developing, too, in this company's area, and while we were considering what we could do to meet this new and unprecedented situation, some of our employees took the matter into their own hands, and, having regard to the seriousness to them of any part of our business being compulsorily shut down, decided first to form from among themselves a small committee and then to get into touch with London County Councillors and Members of Parliament representing districts in which our employees were interested, either as workers or dwellers.

MINISTER OF TRANSPORT'S CRITICISM

Amongst others they quote the Minister of Transport. I will not trouble you by reading the whole of the letters passing between these workpeople and the Minister, but I must quote from one. The Minister says, *inter alia*, "I am inclined to the opinion that the South Metropolitan Gas Company is employing somewhat undesirable means in furthering the interests of a particular commercial undertaking. Provided the public interest is served, I have every desire in public matters to be fair between the various industrial undertakings, but the South Metropolitan Gas Company does not ease the difficulties which arise out of the competition between gas and electricity by employing political methods of furthering trade interests (using their employees in the process) on lines which were alleged against the brewers before the war. At any rate, so far as I am concerned in my public work, I shall continue to be guided solely by the furtherance of the public interest, and I will not submit to attempts at intimidation, however scientific, made by political pressure of commercial undertakings."

Now I must confess my complete ignorance of what the brewers were alleged to have done before the war. I am not like the Minister of Transport—a politician! There is not a shadow of truth in the suggestion of the Minister that what has happened is of political origin engineered by this company.

What did happen was that our employees took alarm over the fact that one Municipal Housing Committee after another declined the offer of this company to take the chance of the business it could get, and completely to pipe the newly constructed houses free of cost to tenant or owner. This privilege, for of course it was one, the Councils, being the property owners, refused, their attitude being quite different from that of the ordinary estate builder, who is quite content for the pipes and wires to go in while building is in progress. I cannot help thinking that in some way or other this attitude may have been inspired in some measure by Whitehall.

MINISTER'S "OWN IDEAL"

It is true that in a speech made at Woolwich a little over a year ago by the Minister of Transport upon the development of the electrical industry, he is reported as saying that "he was not attacking or seeking to minimize the great gas industry, one of the most progressive industries in the country. There was room for both, and the electrical industry would be wise if it learned much from the enterprise and initiative of the gas supply industry." "Room for both," said the Minister of Transport! Some months earlier he told us through the Press his own ideal. "In my own home," said he, "electricity is lighting the rooms, is heating the rooms, though not to the exclusion of the Sunday evening coal fire in the winter, is cooking the food, giving us a constant hot water supply, heating the flat iron and boiling the kettle." There does not seem much room for both there! I rather think the speech at Woolwich must have been "political." There is no disguising the fact that if his example is taken rather than his precept the use and service of gas would be completely wiped out of existence.

This will never be the case so long as every member of the public, whether he lives in Park Lane or Poplar, whether he lives in his own mansion or in a municipal tenement, is free to use the medium he prefers for cooking his food, or for warming and lighting his rooms. Surely the electrical industry, with some of the best brains of the country devoted to its development, is able to go ahead stimulated by our competition, as we are by its, without alternate coaxing or lecturing by any Minister of State.

The Minister of Transport is a member of the Government which stands for freedom of the citizen, justice and fair play. The gas industry of to-day does not need the assistance of Government credit to carry on and develop its business. (Applause.) It never has. Cannot State-supplied credit be more properly applied to find work for the unemployed? Must industrious Peter be destroyed in order to make work for unemployed Paul? (Applause.)

The report was unanimously adopted, and a cordial vote of thanks was passed to the president, directors, officials and employees.

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The Nineteenth of the Series of Competitions appear in this issue of the Saturday Review, see page 192.

No. 12. LIMERICK. Closing date,

February 9.

No. 14. ESSAY. Closing date,

February 23.

No. 15. ESSAY. Closing date,

March 2.

No. 16. ESSAY. Closing date,

March 2.

No. 17. HYMN. Closing date,

April 6.

No. 18. ESSAY. Closing date,

April 6.

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